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EDITORIAL

ELECTORAL COLLAGE

If the Democrats don't build on their one significant victory in the off-off-year elections, they will miss the opportunity of a generation. Harris Wofford's decisive defeat of Dick Thornburgh was not entirely a repudiation of Bushonomics, but even the President conceded that it was a recession-driven result. Thornburgh was too closely identified with the Republican policies, or lack of them, that have plunged Pennsylvania and much of the country into hard times. Wofford didn't offer much more than standard Democratic welfare Keynesianism, but his concern for his constituents' suffering was clear, and Thornburgh's was not.

Wofford's way through the economy to the polls is the route to take, at least at the outset. Although his vaunted "populism" is more middle-class fantasy than fact (see Andrew Kopkind, right), he found the Republicans' vulnerable flank, their cynical degradation of most Americans' standard of living and quality of life in the mad rush to further enrich the rich few: plutocracy at its most brutal. Wofford's call for universal national health insurance, which most Democratic presidential candidates still will not endorse, should tell the party which way the wind is blowing.

Beyond Pennsylvania, there was little good news for progressives. The victory of a David Dukoid Republican for Governor of Mississippi indicates that the race card is still high in the G.O.P. deck, and the defeat of a pro-choice referendum in Washington State dims the hope that feminists can capture the abortion issue from the Republican right. The Republican takeover in the New Jersey legislature shows that what the squeezed middle class really wants is not more democracy but less taxes. So it's a mistake to think that the political culture has already emerged from the long night of Reagan/Bushism into some bright democratic tomorrow. But it may be the hour before dawn.

ETHNIC 'PURIFICATION'
Aryeh Neier

WEST BANK SETTLEMENTS
Mark Taylor
Marty Rosenbluth

THE SOVIET PRESS
Martin Walker

THE PORN THING
Douglas McGrath

ART VS. THE UNICULTURE
E.L. Doctorow

MARSHALL/ *NATION* POETRY PRIZE

TSONGAS AND THE DEMOCRATS

POPULISM FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS

ANDREW KOPKIND

Paul Tsongas came out of the blue. The one-term Senator from Massachusetts who quit Washington in 1984 because of a diagnosis of incurable cancer was barely in the bleachers of the big show of national political debate. For most of the second half of the last decade he concentrated on making money and getting well, the former as a partner in a weighty corporate law firm, the latter as a subject of high-tech experimental therapy in one of the best urban health complexes in the world. He succeeded in both pursuits.

Presidential politics seemed the last thing on his mind, but seeming was not being. In fact, he had been nursing White House ambitions since he first went to Congress. "It can happen to anybody who gets elected in their 30s to the Senate," Tsongas told me softly in his cramped law office in a downtown Boston skyscraper. "You look around at everybody else and say, 'It's time I thought about running. I have a sense of the issues, and I think that I am more honest than they are,' and then the next step is, 'Gee, this guy ran and I think I'm better than he is.' So you end up running. It becomes a part of you. It's almost like the water you drink."

Fate, and more than an intimation of mortality, delayed that next step, but it did not end the ambition. Survival itself may have inflated it. In his memoir of the early stages of his illness, *Heading Home*, published in 1984, Tsongas sounded like a man who wanted to live the rest of his life far from the rat race, smelling the flowers and enjoying his family and coming to terms with his soul. But after his major therapeutic ordeal, a risky immunological proce-

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LETTERS.

'Modern-Day Misogyny Play'

San Francisco
I am heartsick about the confirmation of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court. I watched television throughout the weekend, transfixed by the nominee's malignant sanctimony. Senators Specter, Hatch and Simpson scaled new heights of hypocrisy with their accusations against Professor Anita Hill. Logic and honesty weighed little in the hearing process. Dramatic ranting by right-wing demagogues was apparently more attractive, more persuasive. I saw a modern-day morality play, or should I say, misogyny play, replete with pompous senatorial backdrops, White House stagehands, a presidential director and unabashed actors quoting lines from Shakespeare, *The Exorcist* and an age-old script of gender hatred. The nominee's "forceful denials" and his supporters' intimidating denunciations held sway. I learned that by aggression one can "prove" one's position. I can only conclude that Congress and the Administration *will not* set a precedent by which men are held accountable for sexually harassing women. They *will not* overturn the premises that undergird this nation: Men's words are believed, no matter how malicious, rageful, melodramatic or grandiose, and women's accounts of their experiences are dismissed.

Today I find it difficult to be hopeful, to imagine justice. Tomorrow I will regain my strength and join with women in every state to raise our voices and say No More.

Patricia E. Stevens

Chicago
Why was it that so many people found it more plausible that Anita Hill would risk her reputation and professional life by perjuring herself before the Senate Judiciary Committee and Americans across the country than found it plausible that Judge Thomas, a Supreme Court nominee, would be willing to perjure *himself*, not only to preserve his reputation but also to shift all blame for the sordid affair from his shoulders to hers?

The sex of the accuser and the accused had everything to do with this case, just as it does in cases of sexist exploitation generally. The accused's *maleness* was his best defense. And the fact that his accuser is a *woman* was her worst. It is that simple. Professor Hill's only fault was her unwillingness to remain silent forever. Patriarchy has spoken. And once again it reserved for itself the privilege of having the last word. Women had better think twice before they raise their voices again. Silence of the victims is golden. *Debra Mecher*

Hadley, Mass.
It is easier to sustain a simple lie than a complex one. Clarence Thomas had only to assert a string of ready No's almost before the questions had been completed. Anita Hill's story, on the other hand, carried all the difficulty and contradiction of real human experience. Although much was said about her "fantasies," I heard nothing said about his. Dumping these fantasies over his victim(s) evidently gave him pleasure and a sense of power. It also made him into the very stereotype whose image so understandably enraged him. Since at an unconscious level Clarence Thomas apparently thinks of his own blackness negatively, this stereotype is a split-off and disavowed part of himself. The strength of his disavowal is what enabled him to look and act so righteous. *Deborah Linderman*

East Palo Alto, Calif.
I can't help it. Two words come to my mind to describe Clarence Thomas: "house nigger." Don't blame me for this characterization; blame Thomas himself and George Bush. They have devalued the very term "racism" by using it as a shield to bulletproof a nominee who couldn't stand on his own merits (talk about "affirmative action"!). This has probably set racial equality back a decade or more, not to mention sexual equality.

David Nebenzahl

Clarence Thomas won the nomination for playing Uncle Tom most of his life. He won confirmation by playing a cameo, Malcolm X. It should have won an Academy Award instead of a seat on the High Court. A greater African-American, Paul Robeson, once leveled the charge of racism against the "Un-American" committee investigating *his* life and views. Robeson had far greater grounds for his charge at *his* committee than Thomas did at the Judiciary Committee. But then, Robeson was a real-life Othello, cut down by pygmies of the intellect. Now we have Clarence Thomas. Is that racial progress?

Gerald Adler

Durham, N.C.
I had a dream . . . a dream that Willie Horton Republicans were able to play the race card so effectively that, in effect, a majority of the black population wound up repudiating the principles and the life's work of Thurgood Marshall and endorsed the Reagan/Bush nomination for black role model of the century. The strangest part was that we seemed to stand by while Strom Thurmond, Arlen Specter and the rest of the cynical seven methodically tried to destroy publicly a proud, poised, articulate black woman who never wanted to be drawn into this mess in the first place. I would have thought that those things really happened if it weren't for the old Republican adage, "Bad things don't happen to black people." So, I guess it was all just a fantasy. *Reginald F. Hildebrand*

Roanoke, Va.
If Thomas was the person best qualified for the job, I'm the Bishop of Rome. The whole confirmation process has become so politicized that Bush could have named Charles Manson, and the Republican senators and a few boll weevil Democrats would have fallen lockstep into line. I can just see Orrin Hatch pontificating about how Manson took a group of homeless girls and by his great leadership molded them into an obedient, close-knit family.

The confirmation process has to be changed. The nominees should be selected by a bipartisan committee, assisted by an independent agency, in this case the American Bar Association. The person most qualified could very well be a conservative Republican, a liberal Democrat or even apolitical. No President should have the power to pack the Court with ideologues. And while we're at it, we should consider limiting the terms of Supreme Court members along with those of the House and Senate. *John W. Slayton*

Amherst, N.H.
Federal judicial appointments should require a three-fourths or two-thirds majority vote for ratification by the Senate. The present system worked only as long as Presidents acted as statesmen and played fair. It took a small man in a big job making cynical use of the system to make a mockery of "consent" and separation of powers. And so we have on the highest Court a man who judges it equitable for businesses to fire older workers to save money; never discussed *Roe v. Wade* and attends a fundamentalist church; didn't excuse himself from deliberating a case favoring his Senate sponsor's family; probably treated Anita Hill with cruelty indicative of contempt for women; has scorn for welfare recipients and persons who haven't mastered, as he has, the fine art of pulling oneself up by the bootstraps of others. *Mary Roy*

Chatsworth, Calif.
During the recent national embarrassment involving Clarence Thomas, I watched a judge who frightened me, nominated by a President whose policies I don't approve of and questioned in a partisan manner by senators, most of whom I wouldn't trust to wash my socks. What seems ridiculous to me is that while we're allowed to vote for judges on a local level, we have no say in choosing a Supreme Court Justice. I assume this is to keep them out of the mudslinging and false promises that the politicians are waist-deep in, and to keep special interest groups away from them. And this is certainly necessary. But it's time for a change. *Mike Laskavy*

Keene, N.H.
As the Senate vote was being broadcast over New Hampshire Public Radio, an announce-

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EDITORIALS.

Morning in Madrid

History was made last week in Madrid. For the first time, Syrians, Jordanians, Lebanese and Palestinians met openly and officially with Israelis to discuss peace. For the first time, Palestinians stood on the world stage as representatives of their own destiny, on equal footing with their intimate adversaries. The more than hundred years war between Jewish nationalism and Arab and Palestinian nationalism is at a new stage, one in which the enduring conflicts over land, resources, religion, history, blame, terror, genocide, occupation and liberation may be checked by the economic exhaustion of all the antagonists and the end of superpower competition in the region.

Still, the "pessoptimist," a Palestinian character invented by the writer Emile Habibi, would have been in his element watching the Madrid conference. While the Israelis were the last to agree officially to participate, they had successfully imposed preconditions on the proceedings: Palestinian participants were in effect screened according to Israeli criteria, and the Israelis resisted demands for a settlements freeze or a dec-

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laration that they were willing to trade more land for peace. On the other hand, they didn't stalk out when Dr. Haidar Abdel-Shafi, the Palestinians' chief delegate (a leftist who reportedly helped draft the Palestine National Covenant back in 1964), invoked the name of Yasir Arafat and the Palestine National Council in his opening address.

The Palestinians—who have already given the most on substance—gained the most from the media focus on the conference; both Abdel-Shafi and Hanan Mikhail Ashrawi did so well that some Israeli right-wingers were said to rue their opposition to Arafat's representing the Palestinians. Years of unofficial dialogue and dozens of meetings between Palestinian and Israeli doves informed this sophisticated new style. Now, with Israeli and Jordanian television and radio broadcasting the conference live and uncensored, the psychology of mutual demonization has been dealt a blow.

Real progress toward a historic compromise now depends, above all, on the continued involvement of the United States and the European Community. Pressure as well as incentives will have to be brought to bear on all parties in the coming months. This will present a challenge not only to President Bush and Secretary of State Baker—whose motives, we suspect, have too much to do with their ties to the Saudis—but to the Democrats as well. To a man, the announced Democratic presidential candidates opposed Bush during the September storm over Israel's request for the immediate granting of $10 billion in loan guarantees to house Soviet Jews. Contradicting longstanding U.S. policy and the majority of public opinion, Senator Tom Harkin went so far as to say that "the settlements are not an obstacle to peace." But American Jews are far from united behind Yitzhak Shamir's hard-line positions. Like Bush and Baker, self-styled liberal Democrats have an opportunity to make a positive contribution—rather than pander to PACs—as the Madrid process moves from symbolism to substance. And history will be their judge.

Malling History

Here we go again! A piece of our national heritage is being sold off like just one more defaulted S&L mortgage.

One year and more than 2 million visitors after the restored Great Hall on Ellis Island opened to national acclaim, a revised development plan for the remainder of the island is moving through the approval process. It calls for the demolition of a considerable number of the remaining unrestored historic buildings, construction of a world-class conference center and hotel and the addition of a bridge from New Jersey—deceptively described as a pedestrian bridge.

The former Dormitory Building adjacent to the restored Great Hall, although not officially included in the first phase of the new development plan, would quite possibly be converted into a festival-style shopping mall, following the formula of South Street Seaport in New York City, Faneuil Hall Market in Boston, Baltimore Inner Harbor and other imitations around the country. Crabtree & Evelyn and Victoria's Secret may be coming to Ellis Island.

An earlier, innovative development plan, also providing for a conference center, recognized that the architectural whole is the sum of its parts and called for almost 100 percent preservation of the buildings. And while some people objected to anything commercial on the island, the conference center was not unreasonable in a landmark of this scale. But that preservation scheme was rejected by some seventy-five potential private funding sources. So the revised scheme, requiring demolition of eleven (mostly small) structures out of the thirty on the island and including a new, centrally organized facility with a formula layout, was developed. For this, not surprisingly, financing was obtainable. Rare is the financial institution willing to invest in an untried, creative venture that doesn't fit a familiar funding plan. Innovation is the most difficult thing for which to find financial backing.

The issue of the commercialization of Ellis Island was vigorously debated six years ago and covered in *The Nation* [see Gratz and Eric Fettmann, "The Selling of Miss Liberty," November 9, 1985, and "The Battle for Ellis Island," November 30, 1985]. When Lee Iacocca was chairman of the restoration effort, he tried to impose an even more grandiose scheme, an "ethnic Williamsburg," requiring more demolition and large-scale new construction. By comparison, the idea of a conference center seemed relatively benign.

But there was no shopping mall and no bridge in that earlier preservation plan. To call the bridge a pedestrian bridge stretches credulity. Most visitors to Ellis Island are schoolchildren or the elderly, and it's hard to believe they would be making the three-mile round-trip walk over the bridge. A whole new operation and ticketing structure would have to be instituted so visitors could go from Ellis Island to the Statue of Liberty, and expensive new visitor-handling facilities would be required. Finally, a bridge from New Jersey would bring visitors to the island through the back door. Even the immigrants came through the front door.

The Ellis Island complex is historically and architecturally significant. It is an intact group of institutional buildings and structures in a historic setting—the "Portal of Hope and Freedom" of the period of peak immigration from 1892 to the 1920s. Some 100 million Americans are descended from immigrants who entered the country by way of Ellis Island. Those refugees arrived by boat. ROBERTA BRANDES GRATZ

Roberta Brandes Gratz is author of The Living City *(Simon and Schuster).*

Joe Papp

Joe Papp never had to worry about what to wear to the White House to pick up his National Medal for the Arts. Never mind that Papp brought live Shakespeare to more people than any producer in history. Never mind that he produced the longest-running musical—*A Chorus Line*—in the history of Broadway. He was never offered the presidential pin, and the reason is simple: Joe Papp was too visibly and unapologetically a radical.

In the late 1950s Papp was blacklisted out of a job at CBS

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Television for noncooperation with the House Un-American Activities Committee. It's fitting that his years in American theater should conclude with Papp spitting in the eye of Jesse Helms and the witch hunters at the National Endowment for the Arts: Last year Papp handed back an N.E.A. grant rather than sign Helms's loyalty oath.

It was in those grim days of HUAC's public spectacles that Joe Papp first started trucking free Shakespeare to neighborhood parks all over New York City. At the time, American theater had a stunningly narrow conception of its audience. It was as if the Group Theatre, the Federal Theatre Project and other populist stage efforts earlier in the century had never existed: Postwar American theater accepted as natural the idea of the "ordinary" American as someone who neither wanted nor needed to see plays.

Those who aspired to lives in the theater but who came from the broader reaches of American life were required to act like grateful refugees. The arts cognoscenti expected those aliens to pass through an Ellis Island of sorts, where they would abandon all baggage of memory, dialect and homeground allegiance. And much of the "alternative" theater that emerged in the late 1960s was no different: Disaffected from the high-hat culture mavens, the avant-garde simply had a different idea of which narrow audience constituted The Saved.

Joe Papp never immigrated to the Land of the Saved. The son of a Brooklyn street vendor, Papp brought Shakespeare on a flatbed truck into the neighborhoods—but not as an exponent of art-as-social-work. Papp knew that what his urban neighbors already knew about the pleasures and treacheries of existence would more than equip them for a direct encounter with Julius Caesar or Macbeth.

Later, after the New York Shakespeare Festival had become a fixture in Central Park, Papp's democratic impulse was the same. High-rolling donors weren't issued tickets to the "good" seats; they sat scattered among the hundreds of seats available free to everyone else. With the likes of Meryl Streep or Morgan Freeman in full costume as likely to be drenched in a sudden downpour as anyone in the audience, Papp stripped notions of glamour and exclusivity from the stage and replaced them with a rare solidarity between audience and artists.

As a child, Papp learned English as a second language, which perhaps was the origin of his extraordinary politics of inclusion. Papp was a premature multiculturalist, an early and ardent practitioner of multi-ethnic casting and a champion of playwrights seeking to tell the stories of their diverse communities. Who but Papp could make a hit musical out of the personal narratives of show business's equivalent of shop-floor workers: the gypsies who dance in Broadway chorus lines.

That this son of working-class Brooklyn chose to replace himself at the New York Shakespeare Festival with JoAnne Akalaitis, the daughter of blue-collar Cicero, Illinois, virtually guarantees the survival of Papp's politically bold definition of theater's aspirations and responsibilities. Akalaitis is bringing her own resolute vision to bear, but she shares Papp's insistence that the great classic plays are built from the same dreams, passions and conflicts that tantalize ordinary people's lives.

Joe Papp's persistent belief in the sensibilities of ordinary people offers American theater—and American politics—the best prescription for recovering purpose and vigor in the twenty-first century: Keep your doors and ears wide open.

MARGARET SPILLANE

Margaret Spillane writes about theater for The Nation.

NATION NOTES

With regret, we say farewell to George Black, who joined the magazine five years ago as de facto foreign editor. George leaves to work on a book about the Chinese democracy movement. George's shrewd judgment and deft editorial pencil will be greatly missed, as will the persona behind them. He will write more frequently for the magazine as a contributing editor.

We congratulate Neil Black (no kin), the new president of The Nation Company. Neil came to the magazine in 1985 as director of classified advertising and moved up to associate publisher. His calm, capable ways and eclectic business talents bode well for the future.

★

On Campaign Rhetoric

Yes, those who savor campaign talking
Lament the fact that Jesse's walking.
A race, they think, can't be historic
Without some waxing metaphoric.
They fear that now some mumbling twerp'll
Campaign with phrases lacking purple.

But

There're other Democrats, I'm finding,
With skills that get that stem a-winding.
Though Cuomo's psyche's rather gory,
He has a gift for oratory.
Of Clinton, we know (to our sorrow)
That he can talk into tomorrow.
And Harkin, Iowa folks will mention,
When wound up gets the hogs' attention.

But

Bush will have a speaking style as smooth
as Scotch and soda:
"Quotaquotaquotaquotaquotaquotaquota."

Calvin Trillin

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Servants to Murder: The Press, Bush and Iraq Today

The sight of President Bush and the First Lady standing mournfully outside their storm-wrecked home in Kennebunkport made me wish strongly that they were stationed 6,000 miles farther east, in Basra, ankle-deep in untreated sewage, carrying a sick child with scant hope of recovery since the Bush-inspired embargo of Iraq has rendered that country unable to afford necessary drugs, disinfectant, gauze, oxygen, anesthetic or, for that matter, food.

The Bush people, fully aware that pictures of plague-ridden babies in Basra are bad publicity, have recruited the usual compliant reporters to launch a counteroffensive. Take, for example, a story by Paul Lewis in *The New York Times* for November 5, datelined the United Nations:

> As of last October 18, the Security Council committee overseeing sanctions had authorized 4.2 million tons of food exports to Iraq, more than 80 percent of the 5 million tons of food it normally buys abroad each year.

This implies that 4.2 million tons of food are on their way to or have already reached Iraq. Not so. Assuming Lewis's 4.2 million figure is accurate (which is probably not the case, since he gets everything else wrong), it simply means that prospective exporters have approached the U.N. Security Council in response to requests from Iraq for food, and the Security Council has given its assent to the proposed shipments. But first Iraq must come up with money it doesn't have. The Australians got Security Council approval for a grain deal, but the Iraqis could not produce the cash either for the grain or for settlement of past debts, which the Australians were demanding.

Iraq's food requirements are also understated in Lewis's article. On July 15 a report prepared by a delegation from the U.N. Secretary General's office led by Sadruddin Aga Khan stated that Iraq would need 7.469 million tons of food for the period from July 1991 to June 1992. (Iraq's harvest this year was down 75 percent from last year, and next year's harvest has been calculated by the International Study Team—which includes the Harvard Medical School people—at 20 percent of this year's.)

Paul Lewis's story in the *Times* continues: "United Nations officials say they do not know how much food has been imported so far, but from spot checks carried out inside Iraq, they say that considerable amounts are now entering the country. This conclusion is supported by studies of Iraq's domestic food markets, where prices have stabilized in recent weeks."

What does this mean? Given that before the war most of Iraq's bulk imports came by sea via the port of Basra, which is still closed, it is inconceivable that incoming supplies could be anything approaching adequate, even granted possible seepage across the Turkish and Iranian borders. "Spot checks" are beside the point. All that is required is for someone to stand at the Jordanian border counting the trucks.

Food prices have in fact been increasing in Iraq recently. In Baghdad, where prices are slightly lower than elsewhere, the price of rice has doubled in the past six weeks, from 3.5 dinars a kilo to 7 dinars. Even if the price had remained "stabilized" at the lower level, that would still represent a 1,422 percent increase in the price of a kilo of rice since August 1990.

"How Iraq is paying for these food imports," Lewis goes on, "remains a mystery. But Western diplomats say Baghdad clearly has access to a secret supply of convertible currency that has escaped the effort to impound its foreign assets." Since the alleged bulk "food imports" do not exist, there is in fact no mystery. In one background briefing earlier this year, senior U.S. government officials had expressed doubts to Andrew and Leslie Cockburn that Saddam Hussein has much money stashed abroad. He invaded Kuwait, remember, because he was desperately short of cash. These officials put the reserve at most at "hundreds of millions, not billions." The Aga Khan's report put the price of the Iraqis' food requirement at $2.635 billion.

More from the spoon-fed Lewis: "So far Iraq has refused to accept the Security Council's offer to allow limited oil sales, saying the strict conditions imposed are an insult to the country's sovereignty." So only the pigheadedness of Saddam Hussein stands between the Iraqi people and desperately needed foreign exchange. In fact, the U.N.'s offer was carefully designed to be unworkable, both in the manner that Iraq would be permitted to sell oil and in the extent to which such sales would afford relief.

Soon after the Aga Khan's July report assessing the $2.6 billion cost of maintaining tolerable food consumption, plus another $500 million to import seeds and pesticides for next year's planting, Secretary of State James Baker met with British Ambassador Sir Antony Acland, who subsequently cabled the Foreign Office to say the two had agreed that something had to be done to combat the prospect of adverse P.R. from the starving Iraqi babies.

In August the U.N. Security Council duly passed Resolution 706 authorizing Iraq to sell up to $1.6 billion worth of oil for "essential humanitarian imports," after deductions of 30 percent for war compensation and U.N. costs in Iraq. The precise sum was to be determined following a report from the Secretary General.

That report, issued in September, stated that the "total estimate of humanitarian requirements is $1.73 billion net of deductions." But given the Security Council's ceiling of $1.6 billion, minus the required deductions of $666.3 million, it turns out that Resolution 706, designed by the United States and Britain to mitigate the impact of those starving children, in fact allowed for $800 million less than the minimum required. On October 3, an internal report from the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization said that after transportation costs, the sum available would amount to $870 million worth of food, "substantially less than the bare minimum requirement."

U.S. officials are no doubt particularly keen now to foster

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

the image of Iraqi obduracy in refusing relief. On December 31, the agreement under which U.N. relief operations are permitted in Iraq will expire. Thus public opinion is being readied to identify Iraq as the culprit if the U.S. blocks renewal of the agreement and the suffering among Iraq's people deepens. Consider in this context Patrick Tyler's story in *The New York Times* for November 3. Tyler quoted relief authorities, notably David Broderick of Catholic Relief, as saying the Iraqi government had blocked food distribution from churches and mosques, and from health care clinics in the Amarra area north of Basra. I am told by Catholic Relief's office in Baltimore that this is not at all the story it received from Broderick. The Iraqis requested a shift in distribution from churches to church associations. Apparently they thought such a method of distribution would be less socially divisive than having a line of, let's say, Chaldeans being given publicly separate handouts at their places of worship. The Iraqis requested a shift from clinics, since distribution was getting in the way of the curative functions of those places. They asked Broderick to find other distribution centers but did not block the handouts.

The press has shown itself, much of the time, to be both ductile and gullible as the United States and its allies pursue their war against the citizens of Iraq. Lewis raises the possibility of Baghdad's desire for "a new confrontation" with the Security Council. He seems to be referring to an episode in September when David Kay, head of a U.N. team of inspectors investigating Iraq's nuclear secrets, had a standoff with Iraqi security people in a parking lot in Baghdad. The image successfully conveyed was of Steve Squarejaw facing down the mendacious wog. But British and American journalists in Baghdad later confided that on the relevant day, Kay's P.R. man summoned TV crews to the top floor of a hotel and directed them to point their cameras at an adjacent parking lot. Three-quarters of an hour later their patience was rewarded when Kay and his men came scuttling out of the ministry where they had been photocopying documents and began the much-advertised confrontation. Non-U.S. inspectors on the team said they were a bit astonished at Kay's action, because the Iraqis had been placing no impediments in their path. In other words, the whole affair was carefully staged, allowing the tractable U.S. press to bellow that at last Saddam's nuclear plans had been torn from their secret hiding places. This must have been the fiftieth time that the "proofs" of these plans were triumphantly disclosed.

The War's True Purpose

The proclaimed purpose of the embargo is to provoke sufficient discontent among Iraqis to cause them to rise up against Saddam Hussein and eject him. But the U.S. planners have never seriously believed that would happen. So why are Bush and his accomplices in the U.N. deliberately perpetuating a war on the people of Iraq? For these people the war continues more devastatingly than in January or February: 15 million gallons an hour of raw sewage pour into the Tigris in Baghdad, for example; there are 2,000 cases of typhoid a day in one province in the south; and, to take one district in Baghdad, mortality among children under a year old is up from 575 between January and September 1990 to 1,147 in the same period this year. This is an upper-middle-class district. The situation is certainly worse outside Baghdad and in poor areas, where there has been an estimate of a fourfold increase.

Doug Lummis, one of the editors of the English-language Japanese periodical *Ampo*, was part of the Japan Fact-finding Citizens' Task Force, which went to Iraq to document the effects of the war and the embargo on ordinary people there. Lummis himself went mostly to Basra. His subsequent brilliant description and analysis, scheduled for publication in *Ampo*, contains the most compellingly written statement I've seen of what the war was, and still is, all about:

> Iraq was not bombed back into the Stone Age. It was bombed, and is being embargoed, back into the Third World. Deep, deep back into the Third World, which it had had the audacity to raise itself out from with oil money. Oil money was used to provide the country with an advanced technological and industrial infrastructure. This is precisely what the smart bombs were programmed to pulverize. Oil money was used to provide the people with a relatively high minimum standard of living. This is precisely what the embargo is driving down. Oil money had brought the Iraqi people a relative sense of self-sufficiency. This is precisely what must be got rid of to bring Iraq into George Bush's New World Order.
>
> One Iraqi man asked me, "Bush says he wants to teach us a lesson. But what is the lesson?" Certainly not a lesson in international morality. I think the "lesson" is the very essence of the Third World condition: dependency. The bombing and the embargo not only teach dependency, but have physically driven Iraq back into a position of economic and technological dependency. "Nothing works," the woman technologist at the ultra-modern Basra General Hospital repeated over and over. "We cannot get the parts." Her frustration was intensified by the fact that she knew she could repair the equipment if she could get the parts, and she knew the government could buy the parts if it could sell oil. The lesson is that even if a country has, like Iraq, money, sophisticated technology and a skilled labor force, the countries of the north have the power to drive it back into a state of dependency, just like that of the poorest country in the Third World.
>
> The society is not in a state of disaster, but it stands at the edge of disaster. Machinery that has been barely put back into operation by resourceful mechanics and engineers is bound to break down again soon. Families feeding themselves by selling their household goods will soon run out of things to sell—if they do not run out of buyers first. Presumably the government will not be able to maintain even its minimum rationing system indefinitely. When all these temporary expedients have been exhausted, the society will fall not into general starvation but selective starvation. The poor will starve and the rich will, as the rich always do, find ways to make money out of the poor's starvation. The free/black market will boom, and prosperous disaster relief and aid experts will crowd Baghdad's five-star hotels. Iraq, in short, will be returned to the state of a full-fledged Third World dependent economy.

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BELTWAY BANDITS.

DAVID CORN

■ Spooks and Robbers

Are the Bank of Credit and Commerce International and the C.I.A. star-crossed institutions? That's what Senator John Kerry is finding, though it is not yet clear what sort of relationship has existed between the two. Several years ago Kerry's subcommittee on terrorism, narcotics and international operations investigated links between narcotics traffickers, some factions of the *contras* and Manuel Noriega. In doing so, the subcommittee pursued trails that ran smack into the Company; it had to proceed very carefully, for agency business is the province of the turf-conscious intelligence committees. Now that Kerry is trying to unravel another foreign policy scandal, he again finds that some tangled strands lead toward Langley.

The subcommittee probed B.C.C.I. for three years before it got even "an inkling of a C.I.A. link," Kerry said. That inkling came earlier this year, when William Von Raab, the former Customs Commissioner, told Kerry that Customs received a 1986 C.I.A. report on B.C.C.I., delivered by none other than Robert Gates, then Deputy Director of Central Intelligence. Kerry asked the agency for a copy of this report and was twice told it did not exist. Eventually the C.I.A. "found" the document and furnished it to Kerry, but only in a highly classified form. The report indicated that the agency in 1986 suspected that B.C.C.I. secretly owned First American Bank of Washington, D.C. (The C.I.A. had passed this information on to a number of government agencies, though not to the Federal Reserve.) What else the report revealed about B.C.C.I. remains a state secret.

The agency then provided briefers to Kerry's staff, but they were useless. One did not even know that a prominent B.C.C.I. player, Kamal Adham, had been head of Saudi intelligence and thus intimately familiar to U.S. intelligence. Kerry ascertained one vital fact—that the agency had banked at B.C.C.I.—only when Richard Kerr, the Acting Director of Central Intelligence, gave a speech to schoolchildren in August and disclosed that small detail. The agency had not seen fit to volunteer the information to Kerry.

■ Kerr and Feeding

Testifying last month before the subcommittee, Kerr, a thirty-year intelligence veteran who confessed his discomfort at discussing these matters in public, downplayed the agency's connection to B.C.C.I. As he told it, the C.I.A. began collecting intelligence on the bank in 1983 or 1984 in the course of an investigation on money laundering. Subsequently, he said, it accumulated information on B.C.C.I. while looking into the manipulation of foreign financial markets, arms deals, terrorism and the drug trade. The C.I.A. dutifully disseminated several hundred reports related to these subjects to other government agencies. When Kerry asked if he could have copies of these, Kerr offered to "characterize" the reports. Only after Kerry continued to press him did Kerr mutter a "yes." Nor was Kerr enthusiastic in answering questions about B.C.C.I.'s relationship with former C.I.A. asset Noriega—that just wouldn't be fair, he explained, since Noriega's trial was under way—or about what the C.I.A. knew of the bank's role in the prewar sale of arms to Iraq.

Kerr denied the agency had a hand in B.C.C.I. wrongdoing and insisted that it took no action to block any law-enforcement investigation of the bank. The agency, he said, did not use B.C.C.I. as a "major banking mechanism" for its operations and kept accounts there only on a "limited basis for legal transactions" and, in part, to spy on the bank.

But this modest explanation does not square with the statements of others. Kerry's subcommittee heard from two witnesses—Abdur Sakhia, a former senior bank official, and Bert Lance, President Carter's first budget director and a business associate of B.C.C.I. founder Agha Hasan Abedi—who each tell a similar tale. In the early 1980s, Abedi was nervous about expanding operations in the United States or even traveling here. The word in the bank was that Abedi feared he and the bank were on a "watch list" maintained by U.S. intelligence. ("Hopefully and presumably he didn't know the bank was targeted by us," said an optimistic Kerr.) Around 1985, Abedi's attitude changed dramatically. He dropped his reservations about coming to America and widening bank activities in the United States. Sakhia told the subcommittee that he didn't know what happened but that his impression was clear: A deal had been struck somewhere. Lance, also without any concrete evidence, reached the same interpretation: Abedi acted as if he had reached an accommodation with the C.I.A. So far, there is no telling what spurred Abedi's change of heart. One clue might reside in a recent statement from Pakistan's Finance Minister, Sartaj Asis, who maintained that in Pakistan B.C.C.I. doled out C.I.A. money to the Afghan resistance and its patrons in the Pakistani military.

■ Maybe William Casey Knows

Lance, in his testimony to the subcommittee, steered into particularly odd territory. In 1981, Lance recalled, he was visited in Calhoun, Georgia, by two men who hinted that they were of the world of intelligence. They offered few specifics. One was an American who identified himself as Bill Spector; the other was a Briton. Lance could provide only a hazy account of his chats with them. They made some vague inquiries about financial matters and one told Lance that soon he would be contacted by a "world-class businessman." A few months later, in January 1982, while he was in Hawaii, Lance received an out-of-the-blue call from Bruce Rappaport, an intriguing Swiss financier who controls banking institutions and corporations around the world. He has been close to a number of senior Israeli government officials. In 1985 he enlisted the aid of then-Attorney General Edwin Meese for a proposed Iraqi oil pipeline. (Meese's involvement ended up becoming part of a special counsel inquiry.)

In Hawaii, as Rappaport and Lance played a round of golf, the financier repeatedly mentioned that he was a buddy of

(*Continued on Page 674*)

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WATCHING RIGHTS.

ARYEH NEIER

Writing in these pages recently, historian Eric Hobsbawm warned of the dangers in the current trend to establish "ethnic-linguistic nation-states" [see "The Perils of the New Nationalism," November 4]. One such danger is that, as between the two world wars, minorities in many countries may be deprived of their nationality and become stateless. Some could be forced to leave the lands where they were born and have lived all their lives, with no place to go.

Hobsbawm cited what may be the most extreme proposal that has yet emerged: that of President Zviad Gamsakhurdia of Georgia to limit citizenship to those whose ancestors lived in the territory prior to 1801, when Georgia was incorporated into the Russian Empire. Nothing may come of this, but proposals to limit citizenship for the sake of ethnic purity are also being debated intensely in the newly independent Baltic States. The most restrictive legislation could be adopted in Latvia, which is only 52 percent ethnic Latvian, a fact that has caused this part of the population to fear they could become a minority in their own country. A proposed law, which cleared the first hurdle toward passage on October 9, requires that those who were not born in Latvia prior to June 17, 1940, or are not descended from such persons, must have been permanent residents of Latvia for sixteen years and must possess a conversational knowledge of Latvian to qualify for citizenship. Among the excluded are soldiers demobilized in Latvia who had not been permanent residents prior to their military service, as well as those "sent into Latvia after June 17, 1940, as USSR Communist Party and Komsomol personnel." But exclusion would also apply to those convicted of various crimes, registered drug addicts or alcoholics and those living without legal financial sources. All these and others would be barred from voting and from jobs, housing and other benefits that may be restricted to citizens. At a later date the law could also subject those denied the possibility of becoming citizens—for example, an alcoholic or an unemployed person in his 30s who was born in Latvia but whose parents migrated there after 1940—to deportation. But to where? Presumably, the Russian Republic is envisioned as the dumping ground, though not all those who may be deported by the Baltic States are ethnic Russians and, burdened with its own economic problems, Russia may not want such deportees.

That is the situation now facing a minority in another part of the world: the Palestinians of Kuwait. Although many were born in Kuwait or have resided there for decades, they are victims of the postwar nationalist purification of the country. Typically, those Palestinians who originated in the West Bank, or whose families moved to the West Bank following the establishment of Israel in 1948, carry Jordanian papers and are able to go to Jordan. Their situation is often dire, since they leave behind their jobs, schools and property, and there are few opportunities for them in Jordan. Yet at least they have a haven. The 18,000 to 20,000 Palestinians in Kuwait whose roots are in Gaza, or whose families fled to Gaza from elsewhere in what had been Palestine, have a more desperate plight. When Egypt administered Gaza, it did not annex the territory and, accordingly, the residents never acquired Egyptian citizenship. Unless Israel allows these Palestinians to repatriate to Gaza, or unless Egypt grants them visas, probably their only choice is to go to Iraq. My colleagues at Middle East Watch have established that since liberation, Kuwaiti authorities have forced about 2,000 Palestinians across the Iraqi border, while thousands of others have left for Iraq on their own, seeing no alternative.

When new nation-states were being established in Europe as part of the peace settlement following World War I, it was widely feared that they would deal with their minorities in just this fashion. As a consequence, the League of Nations promulgated a series of Minority Treaties, which were imposed on the new states as a condition of recognition and membership. The Baltic States—which until then had been territories of the Russian Empire—were among those required to sign these declarations acknowledging that their inhabitants had a right to citizenship and protection regardless of birth, nationality, language, race or religion. The League itself was to enforce these treaties and declarations. Unfortunately, the weakness of the League of Nations was reflected in its failure to fulfill this role.

Since liberation, Kuwait has forced about 2,000 Palestinians across the Iraqi border.

Since it was not one of the newly created states, Germany was not required to sign such a treaty. Accordingly, even if the League had been inclined to do so, it could not have invoked a treaty to protest the cancellation of citizenship for all naturalized Germans of Jewish origin when the Nazis came to power in 1933. That event, among the first mass denationalizations on grounds of race or ethnic identity, was not unique in Europe. Fascist Italy denationalized the Croat and Slovene minorities it had absorbed after World War I and, in 1936, even Greece canceled naturalizations, a move directed against Armenian refugees, many of whom had fled there decades earlier to escape pogroms in Turkey.

In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt pointed out that in the 1930s "mass denationalizations were something entirely new and unforeseen. They presupposed a state structure which, if it was not yet fully totalitarian, at least would not tolerate any opposition and would rather lose its citizens than harbor people with different views." It is a great irony that states such as Latvia and Kuwait should celebrate their liberation from the totalitarian rule of the Soviet Union and Iraq by setting out on the road of ethnic purification, which, as Arendt saw, is one that leads directly toward totalitarianism.

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ARTICLES.

WEST BANK SETTLEMENTS

The Myth of Irreversibility

MARK TAYLOR AND MARTY ROSENBLUTH

"The Israelis have built so many settlements in the West Bank and Gaza that the process will soon be irreversible." This argument has been repeated so often that no one even stops to question it. The Israeli settlers use this claim to tout their own permanence, and the Israeli left has used the same claim to alarm people into taking action against further settlement construction. The notion that the settlement process is irreversible has passed into conventional wisdom. No one raises the specter of irreversibility more often than the settlers themselves. Dina Shalit, spokeswoman for the Ariel settlement, told *The Jerusalem Report*, "There are more Jews living today in Ariel alone than lived in all of Sinai before the [Israeli] withdrawal in 1982. The Jewish presence in Judea and Samaria is a *fait accompli*."

In its October 28 issue *Newsweek* stated, "The settlements . . . now make it impossible to draw a conventional border between Israelis and Palestinians. In effect, the settlers have won." But, are these settlements, as *Newsweek* claims, "set in stone"? Or is irreversibility simply a political fiction, a euphemism for the absence of political will?

Since the beginning of the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, Israeli policy has been to build Jewish settlements in order to create what Moshe Dayan termed "facts on the ground." The clear implication is that these "facts" are permanent, blocking any moves toward trading land for peace and thus creating a situation of de facto annexation.

Now that peace talks are under way, it is important to look carefully at the facts. Estimates of the total amount of land in the West Bank currently under direct Israeli control range from 50 percent to 70 percent (the government does not publish an official figure, although it has carefully mapped and categorized every inch of the West Bank). Even the 50 percent figure, put forth in the mid-1980s by Meron Benvenisti, a much-quoted expert on the West Bank, was high enough to help convince Benvenisti that the process was already irreversible.

Since the beginning of the *intifada* in 1987 the Israelis have dramatically increased the pace of land confiscation. Although no other researcher has been able to obtain the type of detailed government documents Benvenisti used to reach his figures, Israeli press reports based on leaked government documents indicate that "the State of Israel already owns [*sic*] about two-thirds of the West Bank land" (Yizhar Be'er, *Ha'aretz*, April 17). Some Palestinian researchers put that figure as high as 70 percent. Benvenisti recently told *The Jerusalem Report*, "In 1983, I said that the settlement process had become irreversible. If I thought so then, what do you suppose I think now?"

Whether the figure is still 50 percent or has climbed to 70 percent, these high numbers obscure a basic reality: Most of this land remains unsettled. While it is true that confiscated land is off-limits to Palestinians, most of it has been allocated for future settlement or is being used for roads, security belts around existing settlements, industrial zones and various military purposes. Without access to government maps an exact calculation is difficult; however, the actual percentage of Israeli-controlled West Bank land now used for settlement housing, according to both Palestinian researchers and Israeli Civil Administration officials, is probably less than 5 percent.

The Jerusalem Post, which takes a pro-settlement editorial position, recently reported that annexing "just" 13 percent of the West Bank would bring 70 percent of the settlers within Israel's borders. This figure, however, includes massive amounts of Palestinian land surrounding and linking settlements, and incorporates several Palestinian population centers, including the city of Qalqilya. Annexing this 13 percent would also give Israel permanent control over the main West Bank aquifers. But even in outlining a plan that would keep most of the settlers where they are, the *Post* acknowledged that "Israelis and Palestinians in Judea/Samaria are *not* inextricably meshed, making separation of the West Bank from Israel impossible." [Emphasis added.].

Since Ariel Sharon became Housing Minister last year, he has dedicated himself and his ministry to building as many settlements as possible before domestic or international politics force him to stop. "Facts" are being created so quickly that legitimate housing needs in Israel proper are being ignored. Much of the construction fueled by the massive $500 million 1991 Housing Ministry settlement budget is completed but unused, with vacancy rates in some settlements, according to the Israeli newspaper *Davar*, reaching as high as 68 percent. Furthermore, the Housing Ministry is in such a rush to create facts that infrastructure—most notably sewage systems and water hookups—is forgotten. Recent reports on Israel Television stated that raw sewage from new settlements near Jerusalem is finding its way into the Wadi Kelt nature area between Jerusalem and Jericho.

A key part of Sharon's effort has been the construction of clusters of settlements placed near or straddling the pre-1967 borders, as part of a strategy to blur and ultimately eliminate the border between Israel and the West Bank. What is known as Sharon's "Stars plan" is intended to satisfy Israel's geopolitical goals rather than to address Israel's housing crisis. Part of one Star is Mazor, a group of mobile homes dropped on the Israeli side of the Green Line last May. Although not itself in the occupied territories, Mazor will be a satellite of the

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West Bank settlement bloc of Ofarim—if anyone ever moves in. Six months after Mazor was established, there is no one living in its 200 double-family caravans. None of the units have been hooked up to electricity, water or sewage lines. Far from helping to meet real housing needs within Israel, Mazor is simply a stage-set for the political theater of irreversibility.

Not all settlers are in the West Bank and Gaza for ideological reasons. Many live in these settlements in order to take advantage of larger and cheaper accommodations that come with a number of economic incentives, such as tax breaks and cheap mortgages, that the Israeli government gives to West Bank and Gaza settlers. So there is a variety of opinion among the settlers themselves about what to do if the Israeli government agrees to trade land for peace. Some settlers say they would fight before leaving, others that they would leave if doing so would bring peace and still others would consider staying and living under Arab rule.

In the months before the convening of the Madrid conference, settlements as propaganda have been as important as the physical reality of the settlements themselves. By creating a new settlement almost every time U.S. Secretary of State James Baker arrived for one of his pre-Madrid visits, Israel was sending Baker a message: Regardless of U.S. intentions, settlement will continue and there is no going back. This tactic is not new. In March 1979 Prime Minister Menachem Begin increased the settlement budget by $116 million the day before President Carter was scheduled to visit, an addition to the $332 million Begin had added to the settlement coffers before his own earlier visit to the United States. In September 1982, the World Zionist Organization and the Israeli government announced the creation of eight new settlements less than a week after President Reagan called for a freeze on the creation of new settlements as well as on the expansion of existing ones.

Despite such actions, U.S. administrations continued to increase aid to Israel. Although the State Department persevered in maintaining the political fiction that no U.S. funds were spent in the occupied territories, the fact remains that U.S. aid made Israel's expansionist policies possible. But the Bush Administration is no longer prepared to put up with such direct embarrassments. By delaying $10 billion in housing loan guarantees, the United States has for the first time indicated it might not be willing to pay for the Israelis to continue to build settlements in violation of stated U.S. foreign policy.

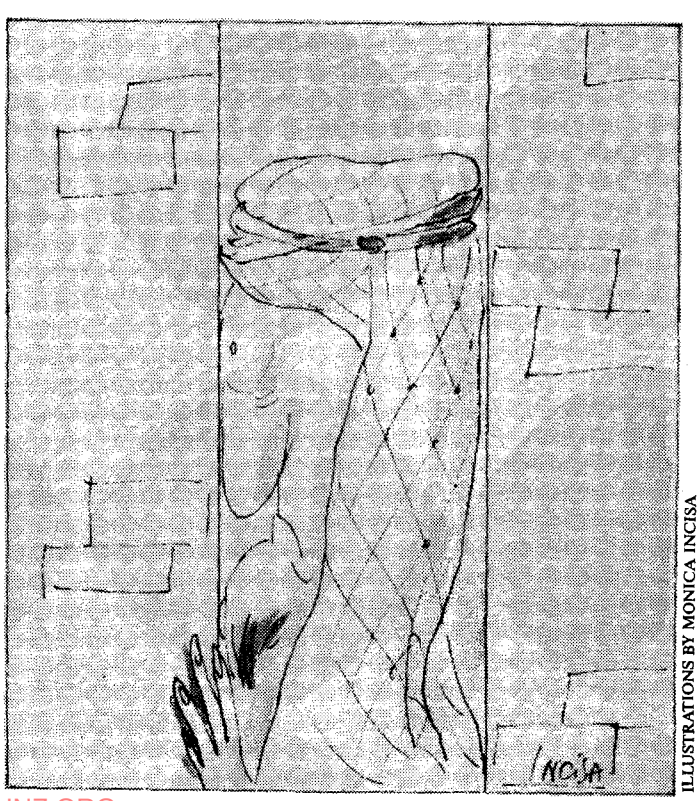
It should not be forgotten that the entire world community, including the United States, has said that the settlements are illegal under international law. Israel has continued to build settlements despite their illegality. The classic example of chutzpah is a man who kills both his parents and pleads for the mercy of the court on the ground that he is an orphan. No less impenitent is Israel's claim that the number of settlers in the occupied territories makes withdrawal impossible. To allow that argument is to permit the Israeli government to profit from its own crime. De facto annexation *is* reversible. It is simply a question of political will.

Even if one accepts that there is a magic number of settlers that would create a red line of irreversibility, it's hard to argue that it has been crossed. Current estimates put the West Bank settler population at anywhere between 70,000 and 100,000, not counting the 130,000 in East Jerusalem. Most of the settlers are concentrated close to the Green Line and live in the so-called bedroom settlements such as Ariel in the north and Ma'aleh Adumim, east of Jerusalem.

The Israeli government has hedged its bets, thus acknowledging the possibility of withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza. Israelis buying houses in the occupied territories have to sign an agreement promising that, should government policy change, they will not seek compensation beyond the value of their house. This was made a requirement in the wake of the massive compensation that the government was forced to pay settlers who were moved out of the Sinai settlement of Yamit in 1982, even though the U.S. taxpayer ultimately picked up the tab.

It is too early to predict what will happen as a result of the negotiation process that began last week in Madrid, but it is clear that a range of alternatives for the permanent status of the occupied territories will be put on the table. Any workable proposal will have to include an interim arrangement under which the Palestinians will assume control over their own affairs. While the Bush Administration opposes an independent Palestinian state, favoring other options such as "autonomy" or a confederation with Jordan, even these alternatives would be dangerously compromised if the settlers were allowed to remain under Israeli jurisdiction.

Israel's time during any transitional phase would be best spent building houses within its own borders to absorb an orderly and phased withdrawal of its citizens. Money now spent on constructing settlements could instead help build a just and lasting solution to the conflict. If settlers don't dismantle the settlements as they go, these houses could provide partial compensation to the Palestinians for twenty-four years of Israeli



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occupation. A house is a house is a house, and what are now settlements could become housing for Palestinians now living in refugee camps all over the Middle East.

The assumption that the settlement process has become irreversible is based not so much on the physical presence of tens of thousands of settlers as on the belief that no world power will put any serious pressure on the Israeli government to force the settlers to leave. The continued presence of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza should not be allowed to accomplish the Israeli government's purpose in establishing them in the first place: the denial of Palestinian aspirations to self-determination. □

SOVIET FREE PRESS

Can It Survive The Free Market?

MARTIN WALKER

Vitaly Tretyakov is so successful it hurts. He is the editor of *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Independent Newspaper), the new quality daily that is becoming to post-*glasnost* Moscow what *Pravda* always wanted to be in the old days: a serious paper with local esteem, booming circulation and international credibility. Its brave determination to continue publishing even through the Moscow coup attempt, with photocopied fly sheets posted on walls, provides a kind of battle honor of which journalistic legends are made. Barring a miracle, this heroic achievement means the paper will go bankrupt within six months.

N.G. was launched before the coup, in the odd barter-plus-influence style that Moscow has developed instead of a financial system. The liberal Moscow City Council was its patron, and in order to persuade *Izvestia* to print the new paper on its presses, the Council promised *Izvestia* twenty skilled construction workers for its new building project. In order to get Soyuzpechat, the state press distribution network, to sell *N.G.* in its kiosks, the Moscow Council came up with twelve new delivery trucks and drivers. The Council also lent the paper 300,000 rubles—worth $10,000 at that time—and provided part of a run-down office building.

The paper was a great success, thanks to the luck of Igor Zaherov, the deputy editor, who happened to be in the Gosplan (state planning) building the day they were allocating newsprint. *N.G.* got its 1991 supply of 17,000 tons at the cheap official price of 700 rubles a ton rather than at the free-market price, which even before the coup ranged up to 9,000 rubles a ton. It was able to print nearly 200,000 copies on an average of three days a week. Since the coup attempt it has been able to go daily, and business is booming. More than a million people have sent in their subscriptions—at the present cost of just over 120 rubles, or one week's average wages—to buy the paper next year. Instead of being a sign of success, that is the shadow of financial doom in an economy beset by hyperinflation.

Recently, the going price for one ton of newsprint at the Moscow Commodity Exchange was 12,700 rubles. That was a bargain. The exchange is only experimenting with futures trading, and although no firm price has been set, the market professionals reckon that the contract price to deliver one ton of newsprint in April of next year will be at least 20,000 rubles, and should go much higher. Add in the effect of inflation on salaries and other costs, and *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* should go broke by May Day.

Something has to give. The first casualty will probably be the way ex-Soviet citizens buy their newspapers and magazines. Traditionally, you order in October, paying in advance for the next year's publications. In a low-inflation, centrally planned economy, that worked fine. Not anymore. *N.G.* and its rivals now expect to go back to the subscribers next year for a surcharge. It is far from clear whether the subscribers will agree to pay it. The old state distribution monopoly of Soyuzpechat charged only 25 percent of cover price to sell a publication. In Moscow and St. Petersburg, the new newspapers are becoming resigned to paying double that amount, although they are trying to set up their own private distribution system.

Something else will have to go—international coverage. Just as the former U.S.S.R. starts to join the rest of the world, its print and electronic media can no longer afford to cover it. When Boris Yeltsin visited the United States last summer, his own Republic's new broadcast network, Russian TV, could not afford to send a correspondent or camera crew to cover the first trip in which President Bush had to treat Yeltsin with respect. Russian Radio sent a reporter, but he depended on the good will of Voice of America to make his phone calls to send the story back to Moscow. Even in June's successful election campaign for the Russian presidency, in which Yeltsin won that respect, Russian TV had no mobile camera to cover his campaign trips to the Urals.

There are three ways in which the postcoup Russian media can get the hard currency they need to finance an international news-gathering system. The first is by selling space to Western advertisers. This is happening in a small way, as well-heeled corporations invest in brand recognition. It began modestly on TV in 1990. The group of iconoclastic young TV journalists who started the intensely popular magazine program *Vzglyad* (Glance) became independent producers and planned an entrepreneurial empire. They bought the rights to the European Top Twenty television show, which features rock music videos, and began selling advertising time to Western manufacturers of jeans, perfume and electronics. They also bought a package of 300 old Western movies from Italian TV and began making "sex education" programs, alternative medicine and game shows—the glitzy, down-market Western stuff Soviet viewers

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had yet to see. For a few dizzy months, all seemed to go well. They even found themselves owning a chain of American-style hamburger restaurants in Italy. Then in December of last year, as the hard-liners tightened their grip on Soviet broadcasting, the *Vzglyad* team lost their access to the airwaves—and all of their investment. They were still bound by contract to provide state television with the rock videos, but as the Soviet economy and Gorbachev's reform plans went into a tailspin, the Western advertisers pulled out.

Now, *glasnost* chic has run its course. Western businesses are cautious, and advertisers are increasingly choosy about the vehicles in which to promote their wares to the fabled market of 350 million people in the former Soviet Union and its old satellites. The potential is there, but with Europe looking uneasily over its shoulders at the recession in the United States and Britain, potential markets have a distinctly limited appeal. There are publications with access to the new Rumpies (Russian upwardly mobile professionals), like the new business paper *Kommersant* or the English-language *Moscow Magazine* that Western advertisers find attractive. But the traditional central press is in free fall, with *Pravda*'s circulation plummeting to below 1 million (a 90 percent drop in five years). The still-popular *Komsomolskaya Pravda* sold 18 million a day this year; next year it may not be able to afford that much newsprint or the costs of nationwide distribution.

Now that the comfortable old subsidies for transporting and satellite-printing Moscow's central press all across the eleven time zones from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean have gone, the cost of maintaining a "national" press is becoming prohibitive. Yuri Baturin of Moscow's Institute of State and Law, who drafted the new press law, reckons that in the future the Soviet newspaper scene will look like the United States in the 1950s: "a lot of big-city dailies, a couple of nationwide press agencies and two or three national magazines. The economic realities of transportation and distribution costs in a country this big are combining with the drive of the market for more local newspapers." He points to the success of *Chas Pik* (Rush Hour), the best-looking and most dynamic of the new weeklies. It is based in St. Petersburg and covers the City Council and local crime beat like a rug, but you can hardly find it in Moscow.

"We no longer have any political problems or censorship problems. The headache we now face is economic," says *Chas Pik*'s editor, Natalya Chaplina. "Newsprint costs us 7,000 rubles a ton, and the paper factories do not want rubles either. So we have to find sausage or cars or spare parts—whatever they need. At least the newsprint plants are quite close, in Karelia. If this problem goes on, I don't know whether there will be any newspapers in the Southern republics like Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, where they have no forests. All the newsprint comes from Russia. I suppose they will try to barter fruit and vegetables for their paper."

The second means of getting hard currency is through political influence. Governments, like what is left of the Soviet one and Boris Yeltsin's new Russian Republic, have access to hard currency from sales of oil, gas and caviar. There are fewer dollars around than formerly, but still enough to help newspapers with the right connections. This is how *Pravda* fi-

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nanced Viktor Linnik, its New York correspondent, and Vitaly Gan, its Washington correspondent, in the good old days. But now, neither man has been paid for three months. Gan has gone home broke, and Linnik has been looking for ways to sell his car, but it's registered to the newspaper so he can't. Before the coup, Linnik was trying to sell advertising space in *Pravda* at $50,000 a page. Since the coup, his bills—credit card and telephone, as well as rent for an East Side apartment—have all piled up unpaid.

As the official voice of the Russian Republic, Russian TV and Radio ought to have reasonable access to hard currency, if only to buy the broadcasting hardware essential to do their job. Not so. The Russian Parliament is stingy, and the Russian broadcasters have a healthy caution about the political dependence this could involve. "I call it the law of the empty hook," says Anatoly Lysenko, the director of Russian TV, gesturing at the places on the wall where pictures of Lenin and Gorbachev used to hang. "As long as that hook stays empty, of Boris Yeltsin or Mikhail Gorbachev or anybody else, we are independent journalists. The most dangerous thing would be for us to become Yeltsin's TV station. We have to be more than that."

The third way that the ex-Soviet media can raise hard currency is through foreign partners, and there is no shortage of offers. Last year, the owner-journalists turned down Rupert Murdoch's offer to buy the weekly *Argumenty i Fakty* (Arguments and Facts), the mega-success of the late *perestroika* period with a circulation of 28 million. The staff of eight declared themselves the rightful owners under the 1990 press law, and instantly became ruble millionaires—on paper. But under the new iron law of hyperinflation and newsprint shortages, the more copies they sell, the more money they are likely to lose. Murdoch's offer remains on the table.

The flagship of *glasnost*, the weekly *Moskovskii Novosti* (Moscow News), has patched together a series of deals with Western moguls. The late Robert Maxwell, owner of Macmillan, the New York *Daily News* and Britain's *Daily Mirror* (to name but a few of his holdings), began printing a British version of *M.N.*, less to make money than "to get his foot into Gorbachev's office and to put down a marker for future investment in this market," says Yegor Yakovlev, *M.N.*'s former editor and, since the coup attempt, the new head of the Soviet State Broadcasting Network. Maxwell's *M.N.* deal fell through, but he was just one of a queue of Western business executives wanting to talk to Eduard Sagalayev, head of the Union of Journalists, and to Vladimir Pozner, the Soviet TV star now working with Phil Donahue in New York. Sagalayev and Pozner want to set up the first all-Soviet private TV network—with Western money and TV equipment.

In addition to Maxwell and Murdoch, Italy's TV mogul Silvio Berlusconi, Germany's Axel Springer Verlag and Bertelsmann, and France's Hersant empire have all plunged into the almost virgin market. Berlusconi tried to reach a deal with Mikhail Poltoranin, the Russian Minister of Information, to supply studio equipment and TV hardware in return for advertising space, eight hours of air time and a near lock on the sale of Russian television productions in the West.

"It was my mistake. I trusted the capitalists," Poltoranin grins. "Naturally they tried to get the air time without delivering the equipment. Now the Berlusconi people have to stand in line with the rest—French TV, Canadian TV, Mr. Murdoch's Sky TV and the new Super Channel organization. Nobody seems to understand that it is my job to do away with the old media monopoly, not to help establish new ones. But since we have no money and are short of everything, we have a difficult bargaining position."

Suspicion of the Western media magnates is one of the few growth industries throughout Eastern Europe. Germany's Treuhand privatization agency made a point of limiting the West German media groups to one newspaper title each. The Czechoslovak government has slapped a 22 percent tax on all newspapers and periodicals as a kind of poison pill to deter the greedy. Maxwell tried to buy *Zycie Warszawy*, one of the most popular Polish dailies, offering more than $4.2 million in partnership with the National Economic Chamber and a 10 percent stake to the journalists. But with the support of Lech Walesa (and perhaps because of bitter memories of Maxwell's publishing of Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski's speeches), the paper was sold for $200,000 less to a Polish-backed private consortium that included the paper's editor. Undeterred, Maxwell used his Berlitz language school base to set up joint ventures for teaching English through books, schools and TV programs with Soviet central TV, Poland's Czytelnik publishing house and Hungarian TV.

But all these defenses erected by post-Communist governments, which suspect that takeovers by Western businesses could involve a different kind of control from the one they have just escaped, suffer from one great flaw: They depend on the market and the money being available to sustain an independent media. As hyperinflation bites deeper and food shortages make it harder for newspapers to obtain the sausages, fruit

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Robert Bellah on Market Totalitarianism

According to the Chicago school of economics, human beings are exclusively self-interest maximizers and the primary measure of self-interest is money. This school's bizarre ideas have a powerful sway over government. Ann Swidler, when doing interviews for our new book, *The Good Society* (Knopf), talked to an expert at the Environmental Protection Agency about how it figures trade-offs in human lives saved versus the costs of safety devices that would save them. Ann suggested, "Some people believe human life is priceless." The government expert replied, "We have no data on that."

A recent poll showed that the thing affluent Americans can least do without is their microwave oven. An increasing number of American families never has a meal together. One by one, family members drift into the kitchen and stick something in the microwave (this is grazing rather than having a meal). Then it's, "So long, I gotta go." What happens to the family when its colonization by the economy reaches this extent?

According to the market model, higher education is just a means to success, not a way of challenging students to think more deeply about themselves and the world.

I could go on giving examples, but the great irony is that the economic conception of life turns out to be destructive of our economy! Community is a stronger basis for an effective economy than self-interest — as Japan reveals.

There is a market totalitarianism that parallels state totalitarianism; both eat up the substance of society. We need to limit market forces when they threaten to dominate our lives; we must withstand consumerism and shallow individualism. It is here that all institutions that embody moral standards are important, the church chief among them. The church has a long history of being the rallying ground for moral advances. We need to learn from what our sister churches in eastern Europe have done to provide space to question a given order and imagine new alternatives.

— adapted from the NEW OXFORD REVIEW

These comments from Robert Bellah say much about the purpose of the NEW OXFORD REVIEW. Edited by lay Catholics, the REVIEW is an ecumenical monthly magazine exploring the moral and spiritual bases of a good society, and probing the significant puzzles in life: evil, generosity, suffering, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

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and milk they need to barter for newsprint, the temptation to climb into bed with the West's media giants will grow.

The irony is rich. Gorbachev's genius in starting his domestic revolution with *glasnost* and freedom for the media helped give *perestroika* a momentum, and popular roots, that blocked the August coup. But the desperate crisis of the transition from the old centrally planned economy to the anarchic free market is imposing a different kind of reality on Eastern European and ex-Soviet journalists. They are about to discover that the West's concept of a free press is the freedom to own it. Having faced down the tanks, they now confront the moneybags. □

WHITE HOUSE DIARY

Judge Thom-Thom And the Porn Thing

DOUGLAS McGRATH

Oct. 13: This has been tough. I've been at the WH ever since Prez took the oath of o. and there hasn't been one item of the least interest which I could put in a book that would sell enough copies for me to quit, which is, after all, the reason I went into government in the first place. The most interesting thing that's happened the whole time I've been here is that the Prez and the First Lady have contracted the same disease as their dog.

I was beginning to fear I might have to think of my position in government *as an actual position in government* when my dark little world was filled with music: and the music was alive with the sound of Hill—Anita Hill! The town's gone wild. People's interest in a candidate for the judiciary rises proportionate to their belief that he has done something illegal. At last, a chapter that can be sold for a lot of money in excerpts to *Time*. I'm on my way.

Prez refuses to withdraw the nomination. Said: "This is another stiff-arm. Another rebuff. But let's not churn around about it. Let's get the whole Bush team in here and watch this harassment-wrapped-up woman as she tries to Lusitania Judge Thom-Thom and then let's get on the same wavelength as ourselves. The Dems will try to make a mountain out of this mole, Hill. But if we can beat the big brown one down there in Panama and knock the butcher of Baghdad back into his own backyard in that gulf out there, we can win a big Vic Damone here."

So while Hill testified, Crisis Squad met in Situation Room. We let Mrs. Q. bring Q. I hid a tape recorder in my jacket. Here's how it went:

Thomas: This is so unfair! I was *out* of committee! The *vote* was *scheduled*. The polls said I had it. I was *in*. I'd ordered my gavel. I had been to the Robe Shoppe for a fitting.

Sunu: All right, let's look at the——

Thomas: I'm just telling you—I'm telling everybody: They had to alter the robe and if I don't get to wear it, I'm not paying for it. This is not my fault. Somebody here is paying for it.

Dar: There's nothing in the budget for alterations.

Prez: Listen, Thom-Thom. Keep your cool. It's a tough town. Nobody knows that better than the President, this guy right here, right here in front of you, Mr. 80% approval. I know it. Been through it. Rented a lot of rooms here. Best thing to do is—here's what to do: Let's find out what the facts are—gonna need to know the facts in this one—and then let's distort them as best we can. OK, Sunuster, shoot. What are the slings and arrows coming our way?

Sunu: I think we'd better come up with something for the thing she said about you watching the porn flick that showed women having sex with animals. That raises a lot of questions for people . . .

Baker: Yeah, like which one did you see?

Thomas: Which "one"? You are funny, Jim. Let's see. There was *After Dark on Noah's Ark* and——

Cheney: Have you seen *Cock-a-Doodle-Do-Her*? *Cock-a-Doodle-Do-Her* is great.

Thomas: Of the barnyard ones, it's pretty good, but it doesn't hold a candle to *Old MacDonald Does His Farm*.

Sunu: Are you kidding? That was terrible. It was the same plot as *Ride 'em, Cowgirl!*

Prez: There was a dog in that *Old MacDonald* jobber that reminded Bar and me so much of Millie.

Dar: *Thelma, Louise and Trigger* wasn't bad.

Thomas: Is that out on video?

Dar: No. Al Simpson had a bootleg of it. He says it's marvelous.

Thomas: Actually, *Suck My Pigballs* was the best. The scene in the disco with the nurse and the boar was a clas——

Sunu: *Please.* I've only allotted three minutes for dealing with the bestiality question and we're about to run over. This means there will be less time for the pubic-hair-on-the-Coke-can crisis, and I think everyone will agree that we'll need all the time we can get on that one. Frankly, I don't know how we can overcome this bestiality business.

Baker: No, this is easy. It might actually help us. *This shows that the Judge is interested in animals.*

Teet: Terrific! Could bring women to our side.

Prez: Good. Gals love the little brown furry things.

Dar: Especially in *Thelma, Louise and Trigger.*

Baker: Also, this might put the animal-rights people right in our lap. It shows that the Judge cares so much about animals that he sees movies where they are made love to. Beauti——

Sunu: This could also help us big-time with my favorites, the environmentalists.

Prez: Good use of the noodle, there, Sunuster. Those grass-munchers are always nipping at the Bush heels about some so-called environmental "catastrophe."

Q.: What more do they want? You've said you want to be the environmental President. But now this really proves it, because it shows that you, President George Bush, have appointed to the highest Court in the land, which is America, a man who holds animals in such high regard that he thinks they

Douglas McGrath is the author of State of the Nation, *a satire of the upcoming election that he will perform next year.*

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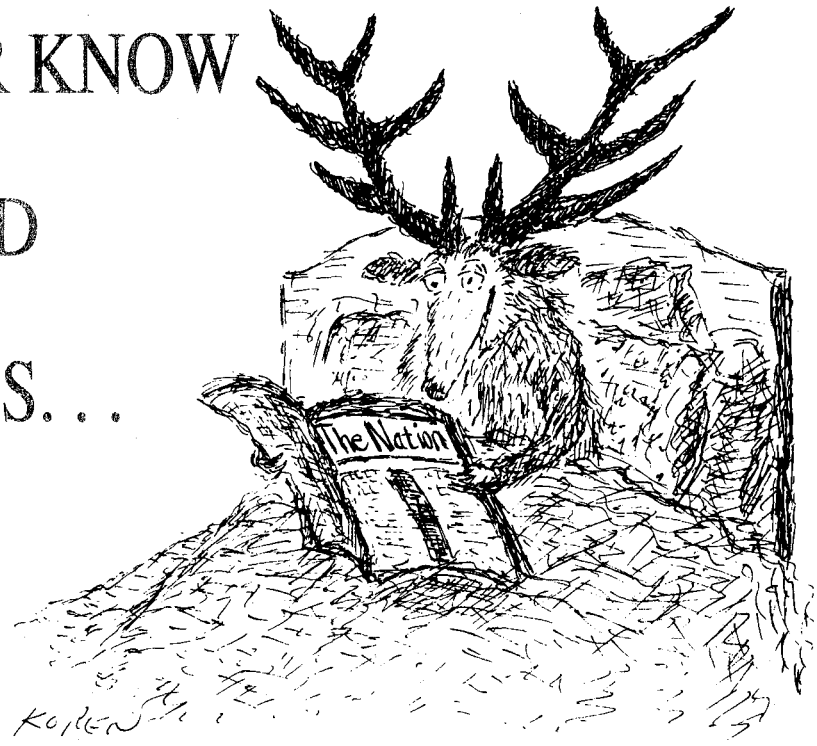

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should be elevated to the stature of sex partners with human beings. What greater tribute to Nature could you possibly——

Mrs. Q.: Sit back, Dan!

Q.: But——

Mrs. Q.: Don't argue with me at the table! What did we say? What did we say?

Q.: The first term is for listening.

Mrs. Q.: That's right. You can talk in the second term.

Q.: But I've got to share my ideas *now* so that everyone will see that I've really matured in office and should not be thrown off the ticket—oh *please* don't throw me off the ticket, not yet——

Mrs. Q.: Dan! That's it! When we get home, I'm calling your father.

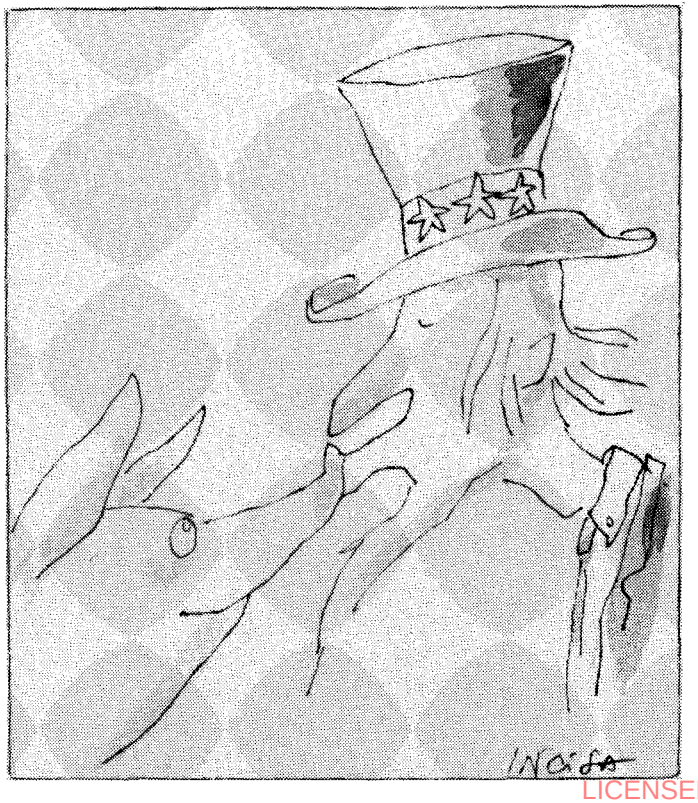
Prez: So the bestiality thing we're twirling for the veg-eaters. What about this whole oral-sex bit?

Q.: All right, all right.

Thomas: Could we call Simpson and borrow his copy of *Thelma, Louise and Trigger*? I ordered mine weeks ago but now I'm thinking it could be lost.

Sunu: I'll have Gates trace it. OK, we've got to hurry. It's almost time for you to go in, Judge.

Prez: So the bestiality thing we're twirling for the veg-eaters. What about this whole oral-sex bit?



Baker: Is there anything on how this could be just some kind of preparation for the oral arguments he'll hear before the Court?

Dar: That's fabulous! A man for whom sex is neither procreation nor recreation but preparation.

Prez: Good work, there, Jimbo!

Sunu: Yeah, good idea, Jim. I was going to say something just like it only I had to swallow. But good—good for you. Finally, Judge, I think we'd better be prepared for someone to ask you about the size of your penis.

Dar: I know Orrin Hatch is curious.

Sunu: No, not—I mean for them to ask about your telling Anita Hill about the size of your penis. That could be difficult to excuse for a lot of people.

Prez: I think he should say it shows he's interested in personal growth.

Sunu: OK, that's it. Let's go——

Q.: What about the pubic hair on the Coke can?

Mrs. Q.: Dan, I told you not to——

Sunu: No, he's right, Marilyn.

Q.: Ha ha, Marilyn!

Thomas: That charge just enrages me. "Pubic hair on a Coke can." Does she really believe that I would think that that would turn her on?

Prez: So it's totally false?

Thomas: Of course. Totally. It was a 7-Up can. A Coke can doesn't have anything to do with sex. But 7-Up says it all. What does she think "up" means?

Sunu: Excellent. Proof that she's lying. Deny the whole thing.

Prez: I just wish there was a phrase you could utter that would summarize the disgust that not only you feel—but that would speak for the feelings many Americans have about this—something strong like, "I've had it!"

Dar: Or, "Nothing is worth this!"

Prez: No, more dramatic, more pained——

Sunu: There's no more time. Come on, Judge——

Prez: We need something——

Q.: Judge, I just want you to know that I'm behind you all the way. I'm always looking for ways to broaden my role around here, so if there's anything I can do for you—I mean, would you like it if I sat next to you in there and helped you think of things to say to the senators?

Thomas: I would prefer an assassin's bullet.

Prez: That's the phrase! Use that!

Q.: See? I knew I could help!

Oct. 23: Thom-Thom sworn in today. Prez v. pleased with the way ev/thing turned out. I saw him this morning. He was on his way to his face therapist to get rid of that pinched look. Popped his head into my office and said, "Hey. The presidential light bulb came on. Let's count votes on the Gates thing. If it doesn't look like the GOP hand will come out on top of the bat, then let's leak that time that Gates had photographic soap installed in the Female Agents' Shower Room. It'll look like the Dems have stooped to another cheap smear, they'll all accuse each other, no one will pursue the Iran/*contra* thing and once again we'll get our man in." □

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Populism

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

dure that required months of hospitalization, his mission seemed to change.

A medical bureaucrat in Washington who writes about the effects of survival from serious illness, and who knew Tsongas slightly, was not surprised. Survivors are usually astonished to find that they are still alive, he said, and often validate their very existence by new projects, hard work or athletic feats. Tsongas, who always enjoyed individual-performance sports, told in his memoir how he went to the Senate gym after various trips to the doctor when his cancer, later identified as a type of non-Hodgkins lymphoma, was under diagnosis. No doubt the jogging path around the Tidal Basin is full of similarly frightened middle-aged men running away from the grim reaper. Recently, Tsongas has been swimming in national competitions—primarily to silence whispers of his incapacity, but certainly to prove his healthiness to himself as well. The resumption of his political career, against all odds, must fall into the same pattern of survival.

Tsongas did not have much going for him when he stepped onto the Democratic presidential playing field last spring. His single advantage was that he was the first to announce his candidacy. Other than that, his national base was limited to Greek-Americans (whose enthusiasm and purses were somewhat depleted by *patrioti* Michael Dukakis in 1988). Tsongas had no simple ideological tag (neoliberal technocrat does not exactly zing), no inside track with the party establishment, no personal fortune big enough to cushion a ride through the primaries and no name recognition outside a small circle of friends in the high-tech industrial belt of eastern Massachusetts. Worst of all, his similarity to the dread Dukakis in politics, ethnicity and social background (both educated in the Ivy League, both lawyers, both second-generation Greek-American suburban Democrats) gives him a handicap difficult to overcome. "Quixotic" is an adjective that leaps to and then lingers in the mind when the Tsongas campaign is mentioned.

But Tsongas has already provided another service, which makes his candidacy important: He has provided a landmark and a kind of explanation-by-example of the decline and fall of the national Democratic Party, at least in its mid-to-late-twentieth-century incarnation. For Tsongas incorporates plenty of the paradoxes of the party, and much of what is at once decent, nonaggressive, thoughtful, wrongheaded, unimaginative, unappealing, apologetic, ahistorical—and above all undemocratic—about the Democrats.

At the outset, the political media gave Tsongas the Homeric epithet "pro-business Democrat," which must forever be attached to his name, as wine-dark is to the sea or rosy-fingered is to the dawn. The word is not entirely inapplicable, but it does suggest that there are some Democrats who may be anti-business. Alas, that one is a category that does not exist, nor ever did. Even the most populist of candidates—a Tom Harkin or a Jerry Brown, perhaps—would defend against all critics his support for business, his enchantment with the free market and his admiration for entrepreneurship. What Tsongas

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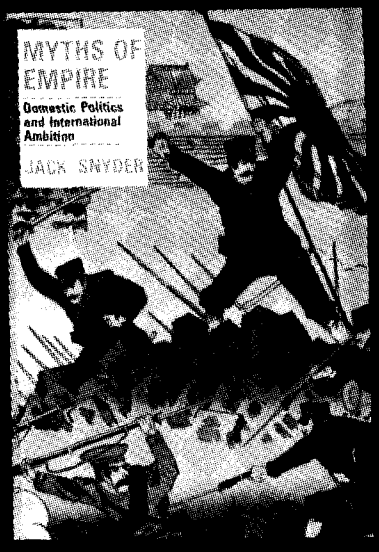

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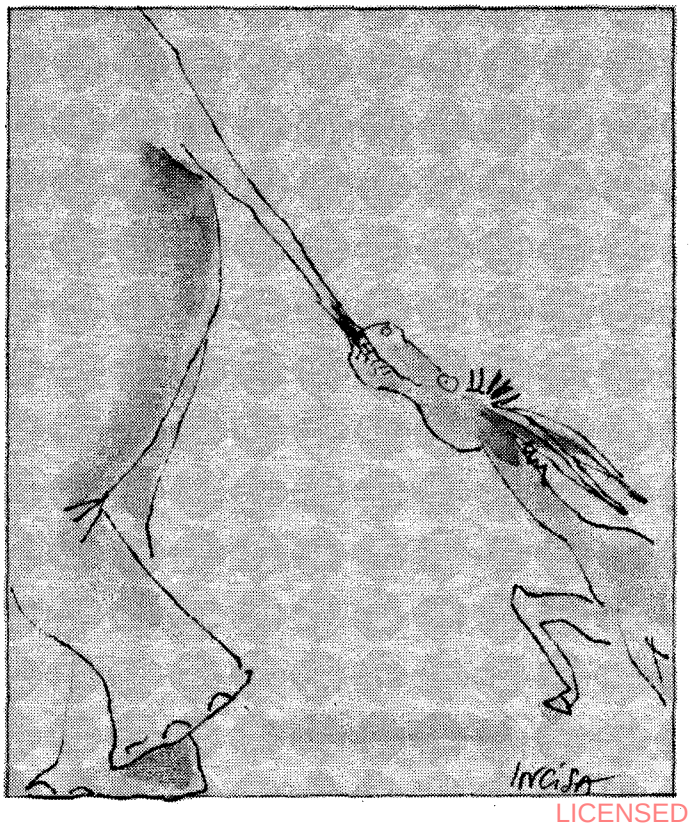
does do, however, is support the agenda of the most politicized agents of the organized business elite. He's for a reduction in the capital gains tax (President Bush's favorite item as well), for deregulation (if any meaningful regulation still exists), for government support (he calls it "economic nationalism," not protectionism) of certain leading-edge industries against Japanese and European competition, for nuclear power (as a "clean and green" alternative to dirty old endangered fossil fuels), for expanded-access health insurance via private companies (without the taint of "socialization") and for education reform, defined as an emphasis on early schooling and training for twenty-first-century corporate needs.

Tsongas believes—and has written a book and a long pamphlet to promulgate his beliefs—that "growth" is the most important issue before the public and that he, as a Democrat, can manage it best: by rewarding corporate expansion with government tax breaks, by subsidies for the educational infrastructure of business and by the promotion of a favorable "business climate." The amazing expanding economy will then provide millions of new jobs—maybe even as many as the 30 million (over eight years) Bush promised in his 1988 campaign.

That's the technocratic part. The neoliberal part is his sensitivity to such progressive values as reproductive choice, cultural diversity, civil rights and civil liberties, peace, prudent disarmament and the idea of "community." Altogether it's what you'd expect from a Peace Corps volunteer in the 1960s who became a corporate lawyer in the 1980s—and a presidential candidate thereafter.

But more than that, it's what all except the most contrary Democratic leaders, advisers and freelance commentators have been telling the party to do for the past several years. And for the most part, candidates this year have been taking the advice. Tsongas is merely the most honest and consistent among them. Give him that: If waffling won the prize, he'd come in last. Bill Clinton, Bob Kerrey, Doug Wilder and Mario Cuomo (always on the verge) make populist noises and sometimes hint at egalitarian economic policies, but their obeisance in the face of corporate power is abject and they don't even notice it. Tom Harkin does make a class appeal and Jerry Brown's clucking about corruption may indicate he is hatching a truly populist egg in that nest of greenery upon which he sits, but neither of them seems interested in mobilizing a movement *on the basis* of class, or of presenting a populist program that significantly diminishes corporate power. Populist talk is cheap, but without a politics that even addresses the configuration of power in society, none of the candidates can deliver real change.



The Democrats' dilemma this year is deeper than ever. Jesse Jackson's departure from the field and Mario Cuomo's tortured indecisiveness—at once fodder and a foil for every political commentator—do not significantly resolve their quandary. Their problem is not what they think it is, namely that Bush is too popular to beat. Even a cursory analysis of the polls shows that there is no deep feeling in the country for that man in the White House, and that after the blip of the Desert Storm gambit is gone, his strength lies primarily in the lack of an alternative. A recent CBS/*New York Times* survey indicated that while 67 percent of the American people give Bush their "approval," only a third—a whopping minority—believe he is leading the country in the "right direction."

So what do the Democrats do? They say they want a chance to lead the country in the same direction as Bush. They want to cut the budget, make deficit reduction the number one priority, lower taxes, reform the system by making it "more efficient" and, oh yes, catch a few more plummeting souls in the famous safety net. The government would be assigned a minimal, behind-the-scenes role in new programs, since its image has been tarnished by scandal and such. The C.E.O. class, on the other hand, would be called upon to pitch in with the odd unpaid leave for new parents, child care facilities for working families and perhaps a new system of wholly deductible health insurance payments for workers. Those may be O.K. ideas (remember Gary Hart's "new ideas" campaign?), but they do not change the direction of the country.

The emerging Democratic platform (not the written document but the one built on practice) rests on a Silly Putty foundation of "middle-class populism," also known at times as "fairness." It embraces the idea that "ordinary" Americans are being squeezed by both the demands of the poor and the excesses of the rich, a combination of affirmative action quotas and S&L failures, so to speak. The policies that arise from that construct are fairly straightforward: Cut services and mobility for the poor and keep the privileges of the rich *in place*! At the same time, Democrats who adhere to that strategy advocate stern punishment for bureaucrats and businesspeople who betray the public trust by stealing more than is considered a fair share, and even sterner punishment for the underclass who threaten the public's sense of well-being.

Millionaire Texan Lloyd Bentsen's idea of populism for the

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middle class is a tax cut—which will of course be paid for, ultimately, by the very middle it is meant to benefit. Harris Wofford, the newly elected Pennsylvania Senator who walloped former Attorney General Dick Thornburgh, asserted that "it's time to take care of our own people, the middle class." For such a line, *The New York Times* anointed him a "populist," and noted without irony that "the problems of the very poor are not at the top of his list." At least Wofford favors a national health system based on equal access to equal care. Tsongas has adopted a version of the "reforms" favored by *The New York Times*, Ted Kennedy and Dukakis, which would merely broaden the coverage offered by private insurers, beefed up with government support for the poor—in other words, the elitist, undemocratic and profit-based system that has plagued Americans like a bad disease for such a long time.

Perhaps the most egregious example of middle-class populism run amok is in New York—both the city and the state. Mayor David Dinkins, faced with the same budget crunch other locales are experiencing, is cutting services and budgets like mad and at the same time finding more millions to spend on police reinforcements and sweeps of homeless squatters from vacant lots. Governor Cuomo has spent nine years doing about the same—parroting the Reagan tax cuts, borrowing billions to build more prisons than anyone in post-pithecine history and then cutting budgets wherever possible when the figures stopped adding up. His most recent middle-class populist ploy was a public-works scheme for New York City, which recalled the pharaonic works of Robert Moses and which began with a high-speed transportation system to the airports and an extension of the subway system to the high-rent East Side of Manhattan. It got even more middle class and less populist after that. Only a few spoilsport "minority" politicians grumbled that the program seemed to ignore entirely the great sprawling barrios and ghettos of Brooklyn and the Bronx.

There *is* another way, but it involves taking that other direction in which the Democrats so far have refused to tack. In Canada, where the New Democratic Party now controls provinces and territories containing more than half the nation's population and the larger part of its economic resources, an N.D.P. government came into power (in Ontario) in the middle of a recession with a promise to cut taxes for the lower classes, raise them for the upper classes and resist cutting social spending while actually adding new programs. The New Democrats (no kin to the birds down here) accomplished this amazing feat by the education, organization and mobilization of a political base that truly needed such a program. To those who cried that there was "no money"—a complaint heard everywhere in the United States these days—they replied that of course there was money, it just had to be shifted around into different accounts. Just a little bit, of course; the N.D.P. isn't Bolshevik or anything like that. But it does seem preposterous that a large, rich province like Ontario, or a large superrich city like New York, can't "afford" decent conditions for all its citizens.

No one would have expected the Democrats in America to challenge the existing political economy if it hadn't been for

NATION REPRINTS

S&Ls, Big Banks and Other Triumphs of Capitalism

Robert Sherrill tells the sordid story of the looting decade. It's a feisty account that shows how the S&L crisis was created, how the taxpayers were betrayed by their elected officials and government regulators, who the chief scoundrels are and why the current bailout is a disaster. Most important, Sherrill warns that the Feds, in willful ignorance of the lessons of the S&L disaster, are moving rapidly toward further deregulation of the big banks—a move that could lead to even greater financial disaster. This issue's importance is intensified by today's headlines. *(November 19, 1990)*

The American Neo-Nazi Movement Today

Elinor Langer's well-researched and chilling look at the growth of skinhead, neo-Nazi and white supremacist hate groups with direct ideological links to the original Nazi movement. Langer concludes that something deeply disturbing is indeed happening here—something every American should comprehend and confront. *(July 16/23, 1990)*

How on Earth?—Strategies For a Habitable Planet

The Nation's special Earth Day 1990 issue features bold articles by Barry Commoner and Kirkpatrick Sale outlining down-to-earth technological and political strategies for preserving the planet. Commoner argues that government regulation has failed to persuade American corporations to clean up their act, and Sale argues that Earth Day 1990 commemorated the problem, not the solution. "To succeed," according to the issue's lead editorial, "environmental politics needs a movement." The solutions offered here are radical, but so is the problem. *(April 30, 1990)*

'Fetal Rights'—A New Assault on Feminism

Katha Pollitt focuses on the anti-choice forces' new strategy: persecuting women who carry or give birth to drug dependent or alcoholic children. Pollitt tells how mothers are being portrayed as "the major threat to unborn babies." Already in wide demand for college textbooks and academic courses in many disciplines. *(March 26, 1990)*

Scapegoating the Black Family

Guest-edited and written by African-American women, this important *Nation* issue debunks the myths and exposes the reality of the black family. Margaret B. Wilkerson, Jewell Handy Gresham, Faye Wattleton and others. With a final appeal/challenge to America by speaker, activist and author Ossie Davis. This issue has received widespread attention in academic circles and was nominated for a National Magazine Award. *(July 24/31, 1989)*

The Lords of the Global Village

Mergers and takeovers are transforming the information business, creating companies worth billions of dollars and concentrating power and ownership in the hands of a few. Ben H. Bagdikian, author of *The Media Monopoly*, examines the growth of these giant communication combines, and profiles such media barons as Rupert Murdoch and Robert Maxwell. This special issue is essential to all students of the media, in or out of the classroom. *(June 12, 1989)*

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the flurry of populist activity in the election of 1988. Cast your mind back to Iowa in the bitterly cold days of January of that year, when the Democratic pack (and some Republicans as well) discovered that a kernel of class consciousness could be found in every American who suffered from, and survived, the ravages of Reaganism. "Class war" was declared in the primaries, as candidates fell over themselves decrying the inequalities, the elitism, the indignities and the inadequacies of the system as it then stood.

Jesse Jackson, of course, led that charge, and he deserves a great deal of credit as one of the few authentic, if failed, populist leaders to emerge since the phenomenon first surfaced more than a century ago. But he was joined by others with their own versions of the theme: Gephardt (Beltway populism), Simon (bow-tie populism), Dukakis (populism-goes-the-weasel), Babbitt (boring populism) and Hart, in his brief re-entry into the campaign (phallic populism). Even Dole (G.O.Populism), Robertson (pop gospelism) and, bless him, Bush (Poppylism) were caught up in the act.

With Dukakis the Democratic nominee, the watchword became "competence," not "ideology," the code for class politics. For three months Dukakis avoided ideological matters, until, as his day of defeat loomed, he resumed the class wars of Iowa. Miraculously (a very few said predictably) his campaign took off and he began surging ahead of Bush in important areas where there was a populist constituency—that is, an electorally significant population of minorities, the unionized working class, un- or underemployed young and old people, distressed farmers, undercompensated women. And on Election Day he came perilously close to beating Bush (despite the unexamined Republican "landslide") precisely because of that deathbed conversion to ideology over competence.

In the next few years, the Democratic Congressional leadership made a few forays into the populist thicket, most notably in the great budget debate of the summer of 1990. Rank-and-file members were pushing for a tax rise for the rich to undo just a tad of what Reagan had wrought. In the end, however, the budget "compromise" produced a scale that gave no more than lip service to the ideal of tax progressivity, and that was that.

Cut back to Paul Tsongas: He represents everything that lost the election for Dukakis, nothing that won Jackson a lasting role in the politics of this period. The chattering heads on TV may say that Democrats can win only if they adopt the Tsongas approach, but they have no real evidence for that, just their own political prejudice. The history of the past three years, however, suggests the opposite: that Democrats can't win nationally if they *do not* change the direction in which the Republicans have led the country. Only by going "to the people," as the old *narodniks* put it, do they have a chance. It's not a sure thing, but it's a better bet. □

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BELTWAY BANDITS.

(*Continued From Page 660*)

C.I.A. chief William Casey. He also took an interest in Lance's contacts with Abedi and Jimmy Carter. Lance said there was no apparent point to the meeting, but he does have a theory or two. Perhaps Rappaport was fronting for Casey to obtain information on B.C.C.I. or, more wildly, perhaps he wanted to determine if Lance, Carter or, maybe, Abedi had any suspicions about alleged G.O.P. efforts to impede the Iranian hostage negotiations—what has come to be known as the October Surprise scenario.

To make matters more confusing, consider this: Rappaport has his own connection with B.C.C.I. On the board of directors of his Inter Maritime Bank sits Alfred Hartmann. A busy fellow, Hartmann was until July chairman of Banque de Commerce et de Placements in Geneva, a secret branch of B.C.C.I. suspected by U.S. government investigators of specializing in weapons transactions and associating with at least one Western intelligence service. (Hartmann was also chairman of a subsidiary of another scandal-ridden bank, Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, which helped finance Saddam Hussein's arms buildup, and in 1986 he formed an offshore currency trading firm with S&L con man Charles Keating Jr.) When Kerry asked Kerr if Rappaport ever dealt with the C.I.A., the acting director cautiously replied that he personally did not know of any such ties and then added that he would prefer to discuss Rappaport in a private session. He also declined to comment publicly on any contact between the agency and Hartmann.

■ Financial Intelligence

What is striking is the extent to which an international financial scandal raises questions related to intelligence. The C.I.A. kept deposits at First American—even though it realized that First American was secretly and illegally owned by an institution involved in money laundering, terrorism and shady deals. Queried about this, Kerr dryly noted, "It was not a concern." Clark Clifford, the former chairman of First American, testified that he checked with members of the intelligence community before he brokered a deal that allowed front men for B.C.C.I. to buy First American. One of the Middle Eastern investors associated with that purchase, Rahim Irvani, had been a partner in a consulting firm with former C.I.A. head Richard Helms. And in 1977, Raymond Close retired as the C.I.A. station chief in Saudi Arabia and went to work for B.C.C.I. shareholder Kamal Adham.

At a minimum, the B.C.C.I. scandal shows the points of collision between the shadowy worlds of intelligence and global finance. Just a matter of coincidence? "I don't think the whole story has been told," said Kerry, whose continuing inquiry has included a secret hearing with Kerr and other U.S. officials. "I don't think this committee or Congress will give you the final answer." Still, it is up to him to decide just how far he will push into this netherworld and what portions of it he will illuminate for the rest of us.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Art vs. the Uniculture

E.L. DOCTOROW

The following is adapted from recent testimony submitted to the House Subcommittee on Government Activities and Transportation in a hearing on oversight of the National Endowment for the Arts. Days afterward, the Senate reversed itself to join the House in a compromise vote rejecting language sought by Jesse Helms that would have further restricted the N.E.A.'s grant-giving process. The vote leaves intact the law adopted after a protracted fight last year, under which the endowment is required to take "general standards of decency" into account when considering grant applications and is prohibited from funding obscene art, as determined by the courts.

I'm a working writer. I pay attention to words, to what they mean and to the meanings beneath their meaning. Underneath this question before you today as to what conditions, if any, to attach to N.E.A.'s grant-giving charter, is a very simple principle, simple but apparently elusive or beyond the tolerance of those who are so quickly and sweetly outraged, those who would punish all voices not in harmony with their own—the crucial idea that we must protect the speech of those with whom we are least comfortable. There is no First Amendment principle involved in protecting the speech of those with whom we agree, those whose hands we want to shake because they represent our own beliefs and convictions. The principle emerges in the conflict and contention with ideas that offend us and with expression perceived to be in monumentally bad taste. At that juncture we define ourselves as a civilization that is free and proud and democratic, with trust in the national community's powers of judgment and analysis and in its ability to illuminate and finally discard ideas that are foul, destructive, malevolent or simply foolish—or we are fearful and constrictive and craven and without pride in the natural self-cleansing powers of a free society through which all ideas flow. Those who would limit artists in any way, in any medium, I call craven. Those who have not the courage of their country's constitutional convictions I call cowardly.

Now you may say, and it has been said, that there is no violation of free speech in the refusal to bestow a grant; that the artist can say anything he or she damn pleases—but if it's obscene, overtly sexual, pornographic or generally indecent by the usual standards, the artist cannot reasonably expect us to pay for making the art. This is solely a question of whether the government should pay for works of art that violate community standards of taste and decorum. This is a question of using hard-earned tax dollars to support the artist who mocks, sickens or otherwise offends the people who provide those tax dollars. That's all.

Of course, that isn't all. In the first place, as citizens we regularly see our tax dollars funding programs and policies and forms of speech we abhor—as for example when our taxes pay for presidential campaigns of candidates whose platforms are inimical to our interests and whose speeches offend our intelligence. We even see our tax dollars going to subsidize criminal enterprise, as illustrated so well by the S&L scandals. Why do we get so righteous about our tax dollars where artists are concerned? The U.S. government taxes its citizens on behalf of multitudes of services and functions it performs, some of them noble, some of them stupid, some of them destructive and shortsighted, some of them quite murderous—but in any event a hefty percentage of them in the face of the disapproval at any given time of a large segment of the tax-paying public.

Yet, this question always arises where artists are involved. Why? I suspect it is because those who would censor, those who would preen in umbrage, have no belief in the value to society of *any* kind of art, obscene or otherwise, unless it is from another age, with the artists themselves conveniently dead and gone. I suspect that behind this whole question of tax dollars is that practical man's vision of the painter, the writer, the dancer, the composer as a marginal member of society—that politician's gut sense of the artist as a luxury the society sometimes cannot and should not afford, who in most instances is something of a fraud, a sort of self-indulgent, self-aggrandizing deadbeat who performs no labor of any consequence but is nevertheless always making big claims for himself. I speak of the latent underlying jealousy we have for elevated expression that is personal, uninvited and powerful, that almost automatic anger we have for a kind of witness and truth-telling that is not endorsed or accredited by church, or corporation, or family, or other governing institution of our society.

This prejudice is profoundly in the American grain, and like all our prejudices it resists rational argument. Not all artists are good artists—very few are in fact great—but the work of independent witness, that often self-destructive willingness to articulate that which many may feel but no one dares to say, the blundering, struggling effort to connect the visible to the invisible, to find the secret meanings of places and things, to release the spirit from the clay—that rude, stubborn, squawking, self-appointed voice singing the unsingable—who we are, what we are becoming—is through all our regions and states and cities and schools and workshops and studios a natural resource as critical to us and our identity and our survival as are our oil, our coal, our timber.

To put restrictions on speech funded with tax dollars is itself to speak in a certain way, the way of pre-emptive state speech; it is to begin to create a realm of approved speech, an orthodoxy of discourse. To draw bounds around speech is to legislate, de facto, more speech to some than to others. And it is automatically to privilege the speech of those who would deny it to others. That is the truth that is lost in the current debate in Congress. The righteous desire to tell artists what they may and may not say is the instinct to monopolize a natural resource.

This is not an isolated issue you have before you about the workings of a minor government agency. It arises in a widening context in which, for example, this Administration has gotten a judicial ruling that does not permit doctors in federally funded birth-control clinics to mention the word "abortion"; a context in which the President has supported a constitutional amendment to limit free speech where the flag is concerned—a rare President in our history, to advocate a retrenchment in the Bill of Rights; a context that includes an exponential rise in the number of books banned from

E.L. Doctorow is the author of Billy Bathgate *(Random House) and other novels.*

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school libraries around the country; a context in which a self-declared neo-Nazi and former Ku Klux Klan leader has wide public support in his campaign for a governorship; a context, in short, and I say this knowing the courtesies of bipartisan inquiry may make you wince here, of racial and gender and ethnic divisiveness that proceeds directly from the ideas and values of the extreme right element of our two political parties. I ask you to consider this context—I ask you to consider these items I've mentioned as creeping increments of an official culture. I ask you to acknowledge as you think about our sinful artists that the agenda of the extreme right, just one element of our political spectrum, is what governs current political discourse—the questions we ask, the issues we raise, the problems we define—as it has for the past dozen years or so.

This issue we discuss here is created by an extreme conservatism as it wishes to organize our lives illiberally, in one mold, as a uniculture—a conservatism that has from its genuine but quite paranoid soul decided that there is no hope for this country except as all other political constituencies conform to its righteous ways. And so we have odd patterns of thought. College professors who object to racist inflammatory speech on their campuses are derided for being politically correct; at the same time, artists applying to the N.E.A. are subject to the criteria of political correctness. It is irrelevant that community standards are violated by racist speech; but it is by upholding community standards that artists are denied grants. All this is quite odd. On the other hand, the conservative movement has never let the true meaning of words interfere with its political intentions. Our President speaks for civil rights but has repeatedly vetoed legislation that would relieve the inequities of racism. He reveres the environment but prevents laws from being enacted that would save it from despoliation. It's all very odd—and if you think I am wandering too far afield here, I remind you that we need every artist we have, every witness, just because things have become so odd, just because people in power don't mean what they say, because our public debate is so degraded, our political discourse so subject to intimidation and flimflam, do we need these strange people who go their own way, these artists. We need them. First we need to stake them to a few months' work, if they're good. And then we need to leave them alone.

I point out to you, if you haven't already heard, the disbelief of the American people upon learning that in a week in which a man with a gun committed another one of our indigenous mass murders in a public place—twenty-three people dead, a new record—the Congress refused in its grim-jawed patriotic righteousness to pass a bill banning the sale of semiautomatic weapons. I want to point out to you the perception on the part of some of us of the ludicrousness of worrying at length about an artist's nudity or naughty words while granting murderous free expression to any maniac who happens to have the price of a gun and decides to walk into a restaurant and kill everyone he sees.

I'm a working writer and I dare call myself an artist. I do not feel marginal to this society but rather deeply involved in its practical working life. My work provides employment to others—editors, typesetters, publishers, binders, newspaper critics, booksellers, teachers, movie actors and directors, set designers and videotape store managers. Painters provide employment to printmakers, publishers, gallery owners and workers, art critics, TV documentarians, museum curators and museum guards. The work of artists in every medium provides jobs and stimulates the economy. The N.E.A. has generally funded younger writers at the beginning of their careers—so that they, too, presumably will be in a position one day to generate jobs for others. All artists are, economically speaking, small businesses. Perhaps we should be testifying before the Small Business Administration.

But in any event, I ask you not to accept the strange, alarmed, right-wing vision of things—it's bad not only for artists, it's bad for us all. Any legislative condition put on artists' speech, no matter how intemperate or moderate, no matter how vague or specific, means you publish a dictionary with certain words deleted from the language, it means you lay out a palette with certain colors struck from the spectrum. Do you really want to do this? Does the Congress in its wisdom really believe that bleeping out words, blacking out images, erasing portions of the tape, is what is needed to save this Republic?

I would venture to remind you by way of conclusion that if you give to Comstockery a little piece of your democratic or republican soul, it will next year demand a bigger piece. As politicians who know history you know that to appease this demon is to make it only more pow-

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erful and more voracious. It won't ever stop unless you stand up to it. For that reason, I urge you not to choose between more or less onerous grant-conditioning language. It is all censorship and I say to hell with it—it's nothing any decent American should stand for. Give the N.E.A. back its original charter, in which there is no language requiring of artists political conformity in any guise. And you'll be able to go home to your families, and especially to your children, knowing you've done them, and your country, a great service. □

The Lenore Marshall/*Nation* Poetry Prize—1991

*The Lenore Marshall/*Nation *Poetry Prize of $10,000, awarded annually for the most outstanding book of poems published in the United States by an American, is sponsored by the New Hope Foundation in conjunction with* The Nation. *Previous winners of the prize have been Michael Ryan (1990), Thomas McGrath (1989), Josephine Jacobsen (1988), Donald Hall (1987), Howard Moss (1986), John Ashbery (1985), Josephine Miles (1984), George Starbuck (1983), John Logan (1982), Sterling A. Brown (1981), Stanley Kunitz (1980), Hayden Carruth (1979), Allen Tate (1978), Philip Levine (1977), Denise Levertov (1976) and Cid Corman (1975).*

This year the prize has been awarded to John Haines for his book New Poems: 1980–88 *(Story Line Press, Three Oaks Farm, Brownsville, OR 97327). The judges were Josephine Jacobsen, Molly Peacock and Donald Hall, who contributed the accompanying essay.*

John Haines was born in 1924 and originally intended—like Mark Strand and Charles Tomlinson—to become a painter rather than a poet; he studied at the Hans Hofmann School of Fine Art. From 1954 to 1969, Haines homesteaded in Alaska, with the loneliest mailing address in the history of American literature. Out of Mile 68, Richardson Highway, came his first collection of poems, *Winter News* (1966; revised edition, 1983). Along with subsequent volumes of verse, he has written essays about poetry and the natural world: *Living Off the Country* (1982) and *The Stars, The Snow, The Fire* (1989). In 1982 he collected *News From the Glacier: Selected Poems 1960–1980*. Now, in his seventh decade, he has done his best work.

Haines has always written with a beautiful ear. His early work distinguished itself by combining lucid images from the natural world with a dreamy inwardness. An imagination of solitude inhabited a solitary landscape; if the sensibility relished an ascetic purity, the body presented itself in the mouth's pleasure of vowel and in the eye's exactness. The later work, collected in *New Poems: 1980–88*, retains these qualities—sense and the imagination—while it adds more of the world and more of Haines's rigorous intelligence. He writes with a hard instrument on a hard surface, making no disposable verses. These sequences gather an older man's experience and vision, as in these lines from the fifth part of "Rain Country":

> Remembering, fitting names
> to a rain-soaked map:
> Gold Run, Minton, Tenderfoot,
> McCoy. Here Melvin killed
> his grizzly, there Wilkins
> built his forge. All
> that we knew, and everything
> but for me forgotten.

This poem draws familiar water for a reader of Haines. Maybe it's better to show his stone-incising by quoting him on un-Alaskan matters. Here's the first part of "Days of Edward Hopper":

> These are the houses that stand,
> broken and entered; these
> are the walls written by rain,
> the sparrow arches, the linear
> stain of all that will one day
> turn to smoke in the mind.
>
> Brick dust was their pigment,
> mortar and the grit of brownstone
> ground underfoot, plaster
> flaked to the purity of snow.
>
> And out of these we entered
> the glass arrangements of wind,
> became the history of sunlit,
> transient rooms, domestic shades;
> a substance volatile, so thin
> the light of stations burning
> at the roadside consumed us. . . .
>
> And out of that the stillness.

Note how handsomely Haines paces his sentences over the line-breaks, varying the speed of the turn—drawing out a long *these*, flipping quickly past *thin*—and note the stony phrase-making that presents us, durably visible, "the glass arrangements of wind." Molly Peacock, writing to the other judges, spoke of Haines's "lushness of precision," notably in the poems about paintings. "Death and the Miser" she called "bleak and terrifying," but she added, "the lexical density gives it a mitigating wisdom."

Maybe the finest poems here come from the first sequence, "Meditation on a Skull Carved in Crystal," and the last, "In the Forest Without Leaves." Haines writes with a clear vision of subtraction and loss, even as far as nothingness. In images of a rare beauty, his lines embody cold places fierce with absence, of "sunlight on the edge of a blade":

> In the forest without leaves:
> forest of wires and twisted steel . . .
> The seasons are of rust
> and renewal,
> or there are no seasons at all.

This landscape is not a Sierra Club calendar. If this devastation reflects a spiritual misanthropy, and Jeffers comes to mind, Haines is no romantic titan. This book ends with these lines:

> A birch leaf held fast
> in limestone ten million years
> still quietly burns,
> though claimed by the darkness.
>
> Let earth be this windfall
> swept to a handful of seeds—
> one tree, one leaf,
> gives us plenty of light.

Writing two years ago about Thomas McGrath's prizewinning book, Amy Clampitt spoke of "the agony of having to choose at all among so many works of distinction, freshness or endearingly outright outlandishness." This year we arrived at a consensus on John Haines with pleasure, but felt discomfort over others whom we bypassed. Whatever you read in the papers, American poetry thrives.

DONALD HALL

HEAD OF SORROW, HEAD OF THOUGHT

> You would think that no one
> had the right to so much
> distance and calm.
>
> And yet how often do we see,
> clouded and still,
> the face of someone gone

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HIL411

out of himself
into stone or water?

The rider in the train,
escaped into the glass fields;
the watcher in the garden,
changed once to a leaf,
now to the cold light on a pond.

Face of the storm, we say,
we have faced you,
heard you howling within,
quelling the atoms
of a bruised, exacting heart . . .

She, who out of the tempest,
came to this calm,
gazing as if from a distance
made equally of granite and cloud.

1985

From MEDITATION ON A SKULL CARVED IN CRYSTAL

I

To think that the world
lies wholly in this mind;
that this frozen water,
this clarity of quartz,
this ice, is all.

At home in the glass house
of wit, keeping watch
on the last conceit:

to say to oneself
in this fallen mirror
that the fog-drift of trees,
the inch of sky
in the well of windows—

These water-broken figures
entering and leaving
the last, drained pool
of light, are all.

III

Where there is nothing . . .

But the drained stillness
of thought, the quelled
and muttering life of stones—

that which in nature
brings on inertia,
passivity, and sleep.

Wind is not welcome,
fluttering the soul of things,
nor love that makes
the shadows couple and sway.

Nothing but death is here,
windless and calm—sheer
absolution in the slow
cementing of sand grains,

glass particles that spell out,
drop by drop, the fate
of water sealed in a jar.

IV

No one the color of darkness
sees entirely the shape of the sun.

But as the ocelot goes, smoldering,
spotted with fire, through the night—

Go now, return to water and mist.
You of the fireborn, go back to rain,

be what in the beginning you were:
seed of ice and brother to grain.

You with the glass mouth, drink
more silence. Be watchful, an eye

upturned in the soil of heaven.
And every shower rebuilds your face,

at the heart of your stillness
the cry of a god trapped inside a star.

V

Blood into ice, and fur
into matted frost—
this is the way of winter,
on earth as in heaven.

Divided nostrils that smelt
of blood from afar;
the throat that drank it,
the lips and the tongue
that thirsted:

changed into that which
is shone upon, that
which mirrors, and that
which sees if looked upon.

Nothing of beast or man
remains, of the stroked fur
and the aroused flesh;
but the filed teeth fixed
in their glitter,
a smile of ferocious peace.

VIII

Of the dissolution
of fabrics and structures,
the breaking
of cemented boundaries:

Improvisations—names
that vanish among
the catalogues that vanish,
all their complexities
strung with spittle:

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Hierarchies, lists of the
flowering and cheeping world:
of these and what
we knew this life to be,

death is the last confusion.

After the smoky anguish
of your dying
comes this resolution:

the opening calm, a blue
thoughtbound space
in which there are signal
lights, globed fires
giving way to night.

IX

Intelligence is what we find,
gazing into rock as into water
at the same depth shining.

Mirror, glazed forehead of snow.
Holes for its eyes, to see
what the dead see dying:

a grain of ice in the stellar
blackness, lighted
by a sun, distant within.

1977-86

The Lost Weekend

LEWIS COLE

Television is supposed to be best live. The thrill of seeing something actually happen before your eyes explains the attraction of both twenty-four-hour coverage of political events—the Persian Gulf war, for example—and the World Series. "This is true," we say to ourselves as a bomb explodes or a player sweats, and in a society in which the market has destroyed any standards of value, truth—whether trivial or cosmic—has an inimitable appeal: *You Are There!* the show promised, and indeed, we all want to be.

No event would have seemed more likely to fulfill this desire than the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings. The most recent episode in the now twenty-year-old televised drama of the decline of the American empire, the hearings were melodrama, mystery and teach-in rolled into one. More dramatically focused than Watergate, more accessible than Iran/*contra*, and featuring both a forbidden subject and—to the white viewing audience, at least—an exotic cast, the hearings, like others in the past, helped fill a role of social witness increasingly abandoned by art. In seventy-two hours the procession of witnesses offered us more personal and social dramas than any novel, film or miniseries in recent memory. And they were a hit, trashing CBS's multimillion-dollar weekend investment in the baseball playoffs and momentarily putting PBS on top of the New York metropolitan ratings heap.

Yet for all the weekend's suspense and laughs—Anita Hill's concentrated testimony, Joel Paul's cool dis of Charles Grassley—the hearings failed to provide good theater's obligatory scene: the revelation of truth. Partly this failure was intrinsic to the protagonists. A panorama of unbridled careerism, the hearings provided an endless display of posture posing as honesty.

In addition, public hearings like the Thomas-Hill confrontation have themselves become increasingly a means of obfuscation. Before a national audience, the powerful—Oliver North, Clarence Thomas—succeed in presenting themselves as rebels, and issues are reduced to referendums on national self-esteem. Rather than a search for either factual or ideological clarity, the hearings are emotional theater. Iran/*contra* became a celebration of patriotism. The manipulation of the Thomas hearings was equally cold-blooded. No sector of society has suffered Reaganism as brutally as black America, yet the Republicans turned the issue of Thomas's character into a celebration of American egalitarianism, an exploitation of Thomas to which the Democrats answered with for-the-record, finger-shaking speeches as gratuitous as an Orrin Hatch apology.

Gavel-to-gavel television provides the perfect medium for this charade. The coverage is like Nixon's political support during Watergate: a mile wide and an inch deep. Everything is seen, but nothing is comprehended. Take the hearings' portrayal of the new, much-heralded black middle class. "The screen was opened up to black professionals, successful students, successful lawyers, successful Americans," wrote Walter Goodman in *The New York Times*. Goodman's characterization is what the screen seemed to show, but this view is surely as one-sided as the cop show portrayal of blacks as junkie-muggers. Anita Hill and Thomas both come from poor families, not long-established middle-class ones, and it seems hardly likely that all the members of their clans have escaped the unemployment, sickness and violence that daily ravage the black community. The deeply unsettling, utterly realistic characterization of middle-class life in Spike Lee's *Jungle Fever* is more to the point: The successful architect is hounded by a junkie brother. However accomplished, these people still live on the edge of the abyss; their lives are efforts not to fall in. The struggle produces both comic characters—like the striving Doggett, insinuating himself into the role of martyr—and noble ones, such as Ellen Wells, the one witness who spoke to the strain of being black in this society and of the humiliating personal and social sacrifices one must make to maintain one's position.

But television can't begin to probe this reality. The commentators who serve as our guides seem locked into viewing all political confrontations as sports events. Fairy tales, plays, epics, parables: Either they've never read any of them or don't understand how these age-old genres serve as ways of organizing and illuminating human experience. Instead, we are treated to endless clichés from the playing field. On Sunday even Nina Totenberg intoned the predictable analogy about the coming witnesses providing the hearings' decisive round.

Besides this, television is made for spectacle. Impatient with detail, the camera alternates between melodramatic close-ups and dull medium shots. We see the sweat on Thomas's face, hear the catch in his throat, then dissolve to a scene of the hearing room that in its blandness—the reporters scribbling away, aides conversing nervously—subliminally tells us this historical moment is simply another round in a Sisyphean struggle among overpaid bureaucrats. The guiding doctrine of the camera is to report, to document as many facts as possible. But in the end the undiscriminating peep show exhausts us; like shoppers in an overstocked supermarket, we are overwhelmed with choices. The images on the small screen meld together into a dispiriting, indistinguishable mush of self-importance and self-delusion. In the haze, caricature emerges more forcefully than character. Wyoming-weathered, folksy Alan Simpson appears more appealing than, say, the slow-to-anger Patrick Leahy

Lewis Cole is a frequent contributor to The Nation.

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or the immensely reserved and impressive John Carr.

In art, we experience exhilaration in the confrontations between heroes and fate. But the aftermath of the Thomas hearings was an oppressive despair. I waited for a heroic gesture—the equivalent of Joe Welch's famous condemnation of McCarthy. But not even the stalwart Hill provided the longed-for moment, never dramatizing the price she paid for her ambition or seizing the opportunity to enlighten the public about the financial, social and psychological pressures that underlie sexual harassment—intimidations that loomed even larger in the weird, isolated subculture of women and blacks working in the Reagan Administration. In the midst of the worst suffering, truth is a kind of redemption. We wanted to find truth in the broadcast of the Thomas confirmation hearings. Instead we met real life: corruption rewarded. □

On the Road

SARAH STAGE

TAKING THE WHEEL: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age. *By Virginia Scharff. Free Press. 219 pp. $22.95.*

When Americans learned during the gulf war that Saudi women weren't allowed to drive, the ensuing outcry dramatized how closely tied in the American mind are driving and democracy. Among our inalienable rights we number life, liberty and the pursuit of the open road. At the same time, not all drivers are created equal—witness the countless jokes about "women drivers," which show the Saudis aren't alone in judging driving a fundamentally masculine activity. In her lively cultural history of the automobile age, Virginia Scharff demonstrates how gender not only affected the debate over who drove but influenced the automotive industry from the design department to the showroom floor.

In the United States women began to drive fully two decades before they gained the vote. Far from being an isolated issue, the acceptance of women drivers formed part of the larger debate at the turn of the century over women's proper place. The idea of females behind the wheel challenged Victorian notions of women's nature and abilities perhaps as much as did women's insistence on access to higher education, the professions and the ballot box. Given these heated controversies, it seems nothing short of amazing that women's right to drive went largely uncontested, despite widespread denigration and ridicule of women drivers. In 1899 Mrs. John Howell Phillips of Chicago became the first American woman to get a driver's license. Although the Automobile Club of America barred women until 1914, no serious attempt was made to prohibit women from driving when states began to license cars and drivers. Scharff does not adequately explain why women drivers encountered so little resistance, an omission that seems odd given her thesis that women's success in gaining access to the auto helped transform old ideas about womanhood and may have hastened equality in other areas.

Certainly suffragists put the auto to good use in their fight for the vote. Cross-country tours and statewide auto campaigns carried the feminist message to every dusty crossroad. But perhaps more significantly, women used the auto to challenge the social limits of femininity. Women drivers made a conspicuous cultural statement about female assertiveness. The image of Anna Howard Shaw resolutely cranking what appears to be a Model T, which Scharff uses on the dust jacket of her book, presents a striking challenge to the notion of Victorian womanhood.

From the first the driver's seat was contested terrain. Women's move from the back seat to the front involved, as Scharff observes, repeated confrontations with popular manners, morals and expectations. There was something profoundly unsettling about women speeding about in cars. Henry James bemoaned his friend Edith Wharton's passion for motor trips. "Such incoherence," he wrote, "such a nightmare of perpetually renewable choice and decision, such a luxury of bloated alternatives." Nonsense, responded Wharton, who saw in the auto "an immense enlargement of life." Clearly, in Scharff's words, the motor car "represented a new, movable field upon which women's struggle for power and autonomy would be played."

The first women to challenge the male monopoly on motoring possessed, like Edith Wharton, the advantage of wealth and social status. Accustomed to hiring servants, they often preferred to be driven rather than to drive. Enter the chauffeur, that dashing figure whose very presence conjured up the potential for dangerous liaisons. Although socialites ran off with their chauffeurs more often in popular fiction than in life, the exaggerated concern testified not only to underlying class and ethnic tensions but to the erotic potential of the automobile. One enthusiast gave new meaning to the term "autoerotic," confessing that the car gave her "a feeling of power, of exhilaration, and fascination that nothing else gives in equal measure."

The ease with which women took the wheel in the early twentieth century, as Scharff's book demonstrates, owed much to the electric car. Automobile manufacturers targeted it specifically at the female audience. Clean, slow and with a limited range, it appeared just the thing for the lady. Henry Ford bought one for his wife. But as anyone who has ever driven a golf cart can testify, there is a world of difference between the electric and the internal combustion engine. Ironically, by branding the electric a "lady's" car, the industry sealed its fate. Men wouldn't drive it and women gave it a spin but quickly abandoned it for the more powerful, less expensive gasoline models.

Although women constituted a distinct minority of drivers before the 1920s, pioneers like race car driver Joan Newton Cuneo enjoyed a national reputation. Cuneo's success on the track belied the stereotype that women were too emotional, too weak mentally and physically to drive. She conceded that perhaps not all women were fit to take the wheel. But, she added, neither were all men. Women often proved better drivers, she argued, because they were more cautious, less likely to be infused with "a spirit of bravado." Cuneo shrewdly recognized the relationship between gender ideology and automotive design. The automobile industry, she complained, was not building gasoline-powered cars adapted to women's uses, even though the obstacles to creating such vehicles she considered more imaginary than real.

From the first, autos were gendered by design. Just as the underpowered electric was deemed the ladies' car, the dirty, dangerous gasoline models were seen as somehow uniquely masculine. Motoring

Sarah Stage, an associate professor of history at the University of California, Riverside, like everyone in southern California, drives more than 15,000 miles a year.

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was dirty work. Women donned dusters, goggles and gloves, learning in Scharff's words to "dress for duress." But culture as well as technology dictated design decisions. Contested notions about masculine and feminine translated in automobile design into tensions between power and comfort. As the car became easier to drive, with electric starters, more comfortable seats, closed chassis and automatic transmissions, automobile advertising styled these advances as concessions to "the weaker sex." Even today the vestigial notion lingers that the "real" man prefers four on the floor and that automatic transmission is somehow a frill developed for women incapable of learning how to shift. Presumably, in the absence of women, men would still be out there in the dirt with their goggles on turning the crank.

Scharff's book, which reads like an entertaining series of essays, explores these and other issues, including women's participation as ambulance drivers in World War I and the way the auto transformed concepts of American domesticity in the 1920s, changing the way housewives made use of space and time and blurring the distinction between work and leisure. Throughout, Scharff is keenly aware of the many ways culture and technology interact and the extent to which the categories masculine/feminine have penetrated all aspects of the car culture. □

THEATER.

THOMAS M. DISCH

On Borrowed Time
Return to the Forbidden Planet
Babylon Gardens

For three decades Paul Osborn was one of Broadway's and Hollywood's most dependable adapters of solid, middlebrow novels into box-office hits, most of them tear-jerkers (*Sayonara*, *The Yearling*, *Portrait of Jennie*, *The World of Suzie Wong*), none destined for the Hall of Fame. His adaptation of L.E. Watkin's saccharine fantasy *On Borrowed Time* may constitute his most enduring accomplishment. It opened on Broadway in 1938, was filmed the next year and revived on the Great White Way in 1953. I first saw it in 1955, when it was the senior-class play at Cretin High School, an all-male Catholic military school in St. Paul, Minnesota, where it received a rather more poetic production, physically, than it has been accorded at the Circle in the Square. The apple tree in which Death is trapped through most of the second act was altogether more credible in the Cretin production (and yes, that really is its name), with leafy-seeming foliage that lent itself to moody lighting. The tree designed by Marjorie Bradley Kellogg, scrunched under the arena stage's mini-proscenium, embodies the philosophy of the entire production: It is *candidly* inauthentic. You look at it and think, "That's supposed to be a tree," just as you watch the play and think, "This is supposed to be entertaining."

As to the relative merits of the acting, my memory is imperfect, but I'd lay odds on Cretin's cast. *On Borrowed Time* consists of equal parts goopy sentimentality and cornball humor, commodities that can have a kind of charm when presented by earnest teenagers but that, in this All-Star version directed by and starring George C. Scott, come across as an act of naked cynicism on a par with a presidential visit to a flag factory. Scott himself, in the role of Gramps, is a study in bemused, chuckling self-approbation, and the self being approved isn't even that of "Gramps" but rather of that dear old trooper, George C. Scott, with all his trademark mannerisms on display: the gravelly growl, the sudden grin that flashes aggression, the winking assumption that we'll find his bluster and gruff bravado a source of boyish charm much as we are meant to be charmed by his co-star, Matthew Porac, who plays his preschool grandson, Pud.

Teresa Wright, in the thankless role of Granny, has but a single purpose: to adore Gramps (though she may nag from time to time) and then to be led away by Death (played by Nathan Lane) into the pretty hereafter just offstage. In Act 2, Nathan Lane has been tricked into climbing a tree from which he can't climb down without Gramps's permission, and so no one in the whole world can die, not even if they're shot in the gut, which is what Gramps playfully does to the doctor (George DiCenzo), who tries to haul him off to the loony bin. Most of the farce in the second act is of a broadness one associates with early silent movie comedies of the Keystone Kops variety, and both DiCenzo and Bette Henritze (as Demetria Riffle, the Baptist Biddy) are required to deliver performances so far over the top that all the farcical elements in the play have nostalgic quotation marks around them, as though to say, "This is what plays were like in the days of your ancestors. Weren't they simple-minded?"

As for the good news about death and the afterlife effused by the "poetic" moments of the play, George C. Scott is not about to *seem* to die, and Nathan Lane (who is reported to have had strong reservations about taking the role, which he ought to have heeded) is constitutionally unable to modulate from the epicene to the uncanny. Here, indeed, is a Death with no sting.

The program notes that this production was made possible with public funds, from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and the New York State Council on the Arts. Jesse Helms might also be cited as Artistic Adviser, for surely the New Puritanism has got the institutional theaters running scared and playing safe. My own solution to the problem would be to abolish public funding for the arts across the board as being inherently corrupting, and I would advise anyone who might venture to disagree with such radical surgery to see *On Borrowed Time* first and then to consider whether the government should be spending tax dollars on this kind of bomb.

That is not to say that the commercial theater can't produce bombs of an awesome magnitude; witness the rock musical *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, at the newly renovated Variety Arts Theatre (formerly that landmark fleapit the Variety Photo Plays) on Third Avenue at 14th Street, now the city's largest Off Broadway venue. In London, two seasons ago, *Return* aced out *Miss Saigon* for the Laurence Olivier Award for Best Musical, so one approaches it with high hopes. Those, even before the show begins, are blasted by the strenuous efforts of the ushers (in Ground Crew uniforms) and the cast to get the audience into Applause Mode: Short of grabbing hold your wrists and clapping your hands for you, they could not get more coercive.

Return represents the twittier side of England's love-hate relation with American pop culture, revering and slavishly imitating standard rock-and-roll hits of the fifties and sixties, while sneering at nonmusical icons of pop culture. The sneer in this case takes the form of recasting the plot of the classic sci-fi movie *Forbidden Planet* as a mind-damaged pastiche of Shakespeare's best-known verses (a course suggested by the fact that the movie's plot was a loose recension of *The*

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Tempest), while the reverence is evidenced in the succession of Golden Oldies delivered by the cast of thirteen. The musical menu includes "Born to Be Wild," "Good Vibrations," "Great Balls of Fire," "Monster Mash," "It's in His Kiss" and many more, and for even the least of them one is grateful, for they represent a respite from author/director Bob Carlton's continually inane rewritings of Shakespeare. ("Two beeps? Or not two beeps? That is the question." Or how about: "Prospero, Prospero, wherefore art thou Prospero?") This is not to say Shakespeare is sacred and never to be mocked or modified; only that slathering *Star Trek* clichés over the Bard's best-known lines is not inherently entertaining. The very young, who are made to experience Shakespeare as a kind of coercion, may find fun in the sophomoric, graffiti-spraying effort, but for me it was just another exercise of patience until someone put more coins in the jukebox.

Slathering Star Trek *clichés over the Bard's best-known lines is not inherently entertaining.*

The acting was uniformly leaden, as the text required, but at least three of the cast members handled their musical duties creditably well. Louis Tucci, as the boy who doesn't get the girl, sang with charm and what seemed an unfeigned adolescent *Weltanschauung*, and Erin Hill as the girl-not-got had her good moments as well, when she wasn't hopelessly enmeshed in the coils of the text. Julee Cruise, though required to wear a fright wig and harlequin glasses through most of the evening, probably did more than anyone else to help you forget where you were and just enjoy her squalling, raucous delivery. Robert McCormick, who does get the girl, comes across as a loutish male chauvinist baritone, but he may not be to blame, since that's what's being asked of him. Similarly, Steve Steiner, as the mad scientist, is a source of constant, nagging pain—but could *anyone* sing "Monster Mash" ingratiatingly?

The set by Rodney Ford was tacky and inhibited the flow of action at every turn, with an "airlock" at center stage that slowly heaved up and emitted smoke for every major entrance or exit. The costumes by Sally J. Lesser were off-the-rack *Star Trek* pajamas, plus a robot getup that any self-respecting eighth-grader would be ashamed to go trick-or-treating in.

Arguably the best plays are not those that get universal raves but the ones people have fights over. I thoroughly enjoyed and would have commended Timothy Mason's *Babylon Gardens* at Circle Rep had it not closed at press time, but I was not surprised when critics at both *The New Yorker* and *The Village Voice* execrated it in terms that made it seem not just a bad play but an enemy action. Both these tribunes of liberalism found fault with the leading characters, played by Timothy Hutton and Mary-Louise Parker, for being "demi-yuppies" or for having friends who are "a nasty, low-minded crew—yuppies, not to put too fine a point on it." They also found fault with their behavior and occupations. *The New Yorker*'s Mimi Kramer marveled that "a man with all Bill's sensitivity wouldn't notice his wife going slowly around the twist and call a psychiatrist." Never mind that in the play Bill is abusing drugs heavily, probably couldn't afford psychiatric help and works on a daily, disillusioning basis at a city hospital. Kramer also wondered "what an East Village hipster is doing working as a male nurse." If she has alternative housing options available for nurses, I'm sure there are thousands of medical personnel living in the East Village who would like to know about them. As to his being a "hipster," I saw no evidence of that but long hair and a drug habit, the latter a common occupational hazard in medical professions. In fact, his verbal style is one of normative, demotic eloquence and wit. I suspect that Kramer simply doesn't go for that *class* of person and resents being asked to accept a "lowlife" as her equal. "Bill is like no hospital nurse you've ever seen," she sneered, "attentive, empathic, involved. . . ."

Both critics objected that the lead characters lack street smarts. For the *Voice*'s draconian Michael Feingold, they are just "two midwestern dumbos who should have stayed in Little Falls, or at least Kips Bay," whose "flip jokes," though "often ingenious and resourceful," reduce them "to the prognathous stupidity of cartoon animals." (One had better be careful with flip jokes around Feingold!) Further, they are so "hokily native" that Feingold pronounced his direst anathema: They seem like characters from Neil Simon!

My theory is that Bill and Jean provoked these critics by virtue of a downward mobility fueled, in part, by their own ill-judged charity and because their sorry fate can be read as allegorizing the failure of liberal values *tout court*. Bill has become the patsy of Opal, a whining, pathetic but also conniving homeless woman (done to a turn by Cynthia Martells) whose ever-increasing sense of entitlement finally leads her to move into Bill and Jean's apartment. Jean, meanwhile, after giving birth to an anencephalic child, is slowly losing her mind, a process that Mason represents as not quite involuntary, until by the final tableau she has almost reached the zero degree of personal autonomy that Opal has achieved, as has Bill, by virtue of his drug habit. Along the way Jean has been robbed at knifepoint and almost raped by a 12-year-old Hispanic boy (a chilling performance was given by Hector M. Estrada) to whom she had given a pencil portrait she'd drawn of him. The boy's crime is prompted by his anger that he can't get even 50 cents for the drawing, as who would say: The arts are of no value to the poor, and the effort to foist "culture" upon them registers as a further indignity.

Without the impetus of wanting to defend my gut reaction that *Babylon Gardens* was a basically well-wrought black comedy and not the farrago of inconsistencies and prognathous stupidity deplored by Kramer and Feingold, I would not have bothered to set forth at such length my sense of the play's symbolic armature. If a story *feels* right; if the characters are intended to be recognizable inhabitants of the known social universe; if the jokes are funny and the surprises surprise (all of which conditions were met by this play quite consistently), that's usually enough for a simple thumbs-up. But we all, critics included, come to the theater (or wherever) with our own agendas, and woe betide the playwright who does not cater to them.

Mason's message may be so unpalatable because it eschews the usual bromidic alibis of a variety of underdogs—the indigent, drug abusers, the insane, and rapists, even when minors—and suggests they may ultimately be responsible for their own misery. Does this make him merely another neoconservative? No, for he offers no solution to the problems he treats of, only their rueful contemplation. What level of systemic evil must be accepted as an inalienable part of the human condition? Are death and madness and lust and laziness our choices or our fates? Each of us has his or her own

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tentative answers, and they tend to be self-serving and incommensurable. Ethical and political contention have their sources in the collision of such incommensurables. A good playwright loads the dice to make that collision compelling. A better playwright, like a god, unloads the dice, and devil take the hindmost. □

LETTERS.

(*Continued From Page 654*)

ment came from the American Bar Association that it had finished making a comparison of Thomas's credentials with the credentials of all the Supreme Court candidates since 1955. Clarence Thomas had the lowest qualifications. He is the bottom of the barrel. The person giving this report said he was dismayed that President Bush consistently picked the most unqualified individuals to serve on the highest Court in the land.

Stephen Amato

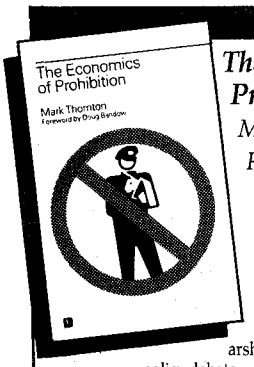
Philadelphia

From the Redwood Forests to the New York Island this land was easily diverted. Left and right are discussing sexism, racism, sex and race, race and sex and couldn't-we-all-do-better-than-those-wackos-we-voted-into-Congress, and no one seems to have noticed that the Bush/Sununu Administration got what it wanted: a Supreme Court that will obey, when it comes down to it, global corporate new world orders. The entire Thomas/Hill deal is being treated as if the rules were followed but that it was just one heck of a situation. The silver linings about sexual harassment and race being discussed are pluses but, more than likely, they are silver bullets that did more harm than good.

Some oddities: A radio report said two conservative Associate Justices believed that Thomas, now their colleague, was lying, but there is still nary a word in the mainstream media. No connection has been made between this troublesome information and the extraordinary secretive swearing-in of Thomas—a Justice cannot be impeached for acts committed before his tenure begins. One day during the hearings a Danny DeVito movie ad appeared on TV (not seen since) showing him as a boss talking to a woman in his office about getting sweaty together between silk sheets. On NPR, a movie reviewer was fondly remembering the good old Rock Hudson/Doris Day movies in which he doggedly chases her, despite protestations, until, of course, she surrenders.

The hearings were the Super Bowl for Thomas and the Administration. Would Vince Lombardi have disallowed his own team's winning touchdown if he saw an infraction that the refs missed? If only this were just a football game.

John Jonik



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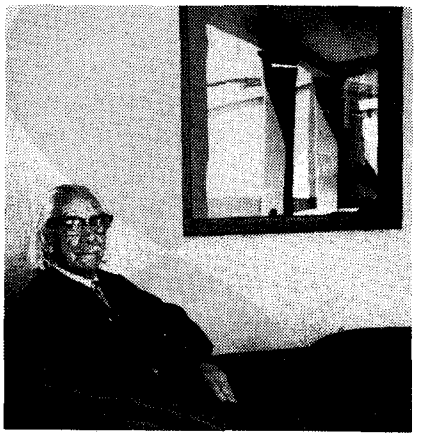
Photographs by Carole Patterson



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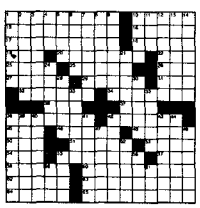

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O		I		I		U		R		E		X		C	
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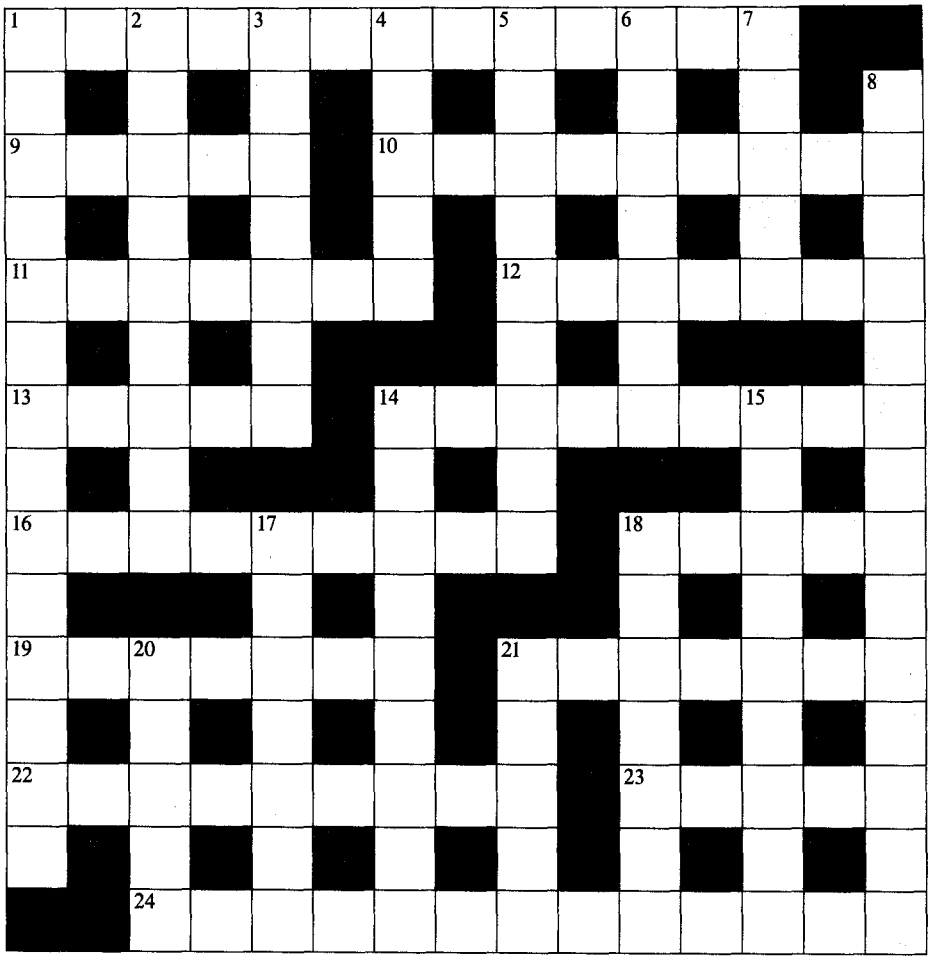
Crossword Puzzle No. 2359

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 How to renew a contract with a person's spirit? One has to put up with it, if one does. (6,7)
9 Drink from this tree? (5)
10 Rears true to form: one should cherish money! (9)
11 Bad dealing, which should become straightened out. (7)
12 Somewhat like the author of a famous elegy otherwise we term it an unusual spell. (7)
13 Sandpiles seen in the composition "Nudes." (5)
14 Certainly more than just a drawer for the law officer. (9)
16 Teeth play an important role in non-physical communication. (9)
18 Fish under the bridge in nursery tales. (5)
19 One in 10 has to be figured out! (7)
21 Rover kept in suspense by such an expression? (4-3)
22 No so fast as a *Merry Wives*, character, showing some sign of hesitation. (9)
23 Following Mary Ann was George Eliot. (5)
24 Putting what might be lighter in cartons, or where one might hope to see more than one round? (6,7)

DOWN

1 Responsible for the music of *2001*. (7,7)
2 Like some bookcases, once tails are turned. (9)
3 What's left of the coffee might cause divorce! (7)
4 Chose the wrong depot, obviously. (5)
5 You might look for an exit in one. (9)
6 One way to determine a sort of tease is not hard at all! (7)
7 Nobel prizewinner in transfer microscopy. (5)
8 What do they look for? Remains to be seen, if old! (14)
14 A type such as Tom, familiarly, brings a relative of Billy up with an actual boat. (9)
15 The King's is blue and takes a dip, which could be disastrous. (5,4)
17 On the average, notice an animal is an apparent contradiction? (7)
18 Some dude who has been sitting in the sun too much, which is certainly touching! (7)
20 Breaking a brace is certainly bitter! (Sounds like one who reputedly hates Croats!) (5)
21 One scheduled to be the winner of a classic race has a thousand women here! (5)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

PUZZLED?

No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules," send for those of Mr. Lewis to *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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